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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**CAPABILITIES OF THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE  
FORCE AND ITS IMPACT ON UNITED STATES-JAPAN  
RELATIONS**

by

Jonathan E. Pettibon

March 2011

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Robert Weiner  
Alice Miller

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**CAPABILITIES OF THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCE AND ITS  
IMPACT ON UNITED STATES-JAPAN RELATIONS**

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First Lieutenant, United States Marine Corps  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS  
(FAR EAST, SOUTHEAST ASIA, PACIFIC)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Determining the capabilities of the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF) is necessary to understand its impact on U.S. Japan relations. Few scholars have done the due diligence needed to truly determine the capabilities of this force. For example, general descriptions of the capabilities of the JSDF overall ignore wide variation in the capabilities of its three branches. Additionally, Japan has increased its involvement in international security affairs during the past two decades, but its involvement in areas such as the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO) or Humanitarian Aid/Disaster Relief operations is often exaggerated, overstating the experience of the JSDF. The lack of accurate or complete assessments of the capabilities of the JSDF affects both American and Japanese policymakers. With a better understanding of the JSDF, we can make more precise assessments of Japan's future intentions in its foreign policy, allowing us to address broader questions: how will this evolution continue into the future and how do JSDF capabilities affect the United States' security relationship with Japan? This thesis analyzes the history and structure of the JSDF in order to understand its actual capabilities and its future role in the international security environment.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>1. What Are the Actual Capabilities of the JSDF? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>a. Literature Review on JSDF Capabilities.....</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>2. How Do the Capabilities of the JSDF Affect U.S. Japan Relations?.....</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>a. Literature Review on U.S. Japan Relations.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>ORIGINAL EXPECTATIONS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>THESIS OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCE.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>POST-WORLD WAR II .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>JSDF BUILD-UP.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>THE END OF THE COLD WAR .....</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>1. Humanitarian Aid/Disaster Relief.....</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>2. Peacekeeping Operations .....</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>3. Other International Operations.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCE: A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ...</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING CAPABILITY .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>THE GROUND SELF-DEFENSE FORCE.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>AIR SELF-DEFENSE FORCE .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>MARITIME SELF-DEFENSE FORCE .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>E.</b>	<b>BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>F.</b>	<b>DEFENSE BUDGET .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>OVERALL CAPABILITIES OF THE JSDF.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>IS THE JSDF A NORMAL MILITARY?.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>WHAT IMPACT DOES THE JSDF HAVE ON U.S. JAPAN RELATIONS? .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>FUTURE RESEARCH ON JSDF CAPABILITIES.....</b>	<b>74</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>77</b>
	<b>INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....</b>	<b>81</b>

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	UN contributions to peacekeeping operations .....	32
Figure 2.	Location of SDF Units as of 31 March 2010.....	36
Figure 3.	GSDF Capability Chart.....	43
Figure 4.	ASDF Capabilities Chart .....	46
Figure 5.	MSDF Capabilities Chart.....	52
Figure 6.	JSDF Organizational Diagram.....	53
Figure 7.	BMD Capabilities Chart .....	58
Figure 8.	The Top 15 Countries with the Highest Military Expenditures in 2009.....	60
Figure 9.	JSDF Capabilities Chart.....	65

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## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1.	Record of Japan's International Peace Cooperation Activities.....	30
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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ASDF	Air Self-Defense Force
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
CRF	Central Readiness Force
CRS	Congressional Research Services
DDH	Helicopter Destroyers
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DR	Disaster Relief
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOJ	Government of Japan
GSDF	Ground Self-Defense Force
HA	Humanitarian Aid
IRBM	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles
JDA	Japan Defense Agency
JDF	Japanese Defense Force
JSDF	Japanese Self-Defense Force
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MSDF	Maritime Self-Defense Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDPG	National Defense Program Guidelines



NDPO	National Defense Program Outline
NPR	National Police Reserve
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PAC	Patriot Advanced Capability
PACOM	United States Pacific Command
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
R&D	Research and Development
RIMPAC	Rim of the Pacific Exercise
ROK	Republic of Korea
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SM	Standard Missile
SRBM	Short Range Ballistic Missile
UN	United Nations
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
WWII	World War II
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

What are the capabilities of the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF)? This is the primary question of this thesis. How one determines actual military capability is important to understand. Understanding the capabilities of the JSDF is a difficult task because the overall force has an assortment of aspects that are very capable, middle of the road, or have limited to no capability. Post World War II Japan is rooted in a history of pacifism and limited security involvement that directly impacts its capabilities today. Incorporating each aspect into one overall assessment is the objective of this research. Many scholars have offered opinions on the JSDF, but few have performed the research needed to truly determine the capabilities of this force. The lack of an accurate understanding of the true capabilities of the JSDF affects both American and Japanese policy makers. Incomplete or inaccurate information on the JSDF's capabilities may lead both countries in the alliance to make decisions detrimental to the overall security environment in the region. With a better understanding of JSDF capabilities, we can make more accurate assessments of Japan's future intentions in its foreign policy. Once the capabilities of the JSDF are determined, this helps answer other questions: is the JSDF a "normal" military, and what constitutes a normal military? How did the JSDF evolve into the force it is today? And, finally, how does this affect U.S.-Japan relations and an alliance that has lasted over half a century? The main objective of this research is to determine, very specifically, the overall capabilities of the JSDF. These secondary questions are addressed briefly in this thesis, but future scholarly work can use the JSDF capability assessments made here to further answer these important questions on East Asian security affairs.

An additional purpose of this research is to determine if the JSDF is a 'true military' or falls into a different category of international security that fails to meet many of the capabilities of a true military. My preliminary judgment going into this research was that the JSDF is a capable international security force, but not necessarily a true military. Countries like the United States, China, Russia, Britain, and India, among

others, are truly capable militaries. I argue that capable international security forces provide for the basic defense of their homelands, often with the aid of other international military forces, and contribute to the peace and stability of the region and world through modern international institutions such as NATO or the United Nations, via mechanisms such as peacekeeping and disaster relief operations. True militaries have the above capability, as well as the capacity and intent to exert combat aggression offensively, projecting power outside their national borders or recognized zones of territorial claims. Scholars tend to write about the JSDF as either extremely capable overall or insufficient in its capacity to provide security for Japan. As you will see, my research suggests that in some areas the JSDF is very capable for various reasons, while in other respects is not. The Japanese maritime forces are highly capable in specific areas for certain operations, while the ground forces have much weaker capabilities. This research explains why that is and makes specific assessments about the various capabilities of the JSDF.

### **1. What Are the Actual Capabilities of the JSDF?**

Before assessing the capabilities of the JSDF, it is necessary to determine what factors indicate the level of capability of a military or security force. These factors can be highly subjective, but some basic fundamental characteristics describe how a capable military differs from a lower-tiered force. The basic characteristics include the ability to defend one's homeland with the military services necessary to do so. For example, a landlocked country would certainly require a strong army and capable air force, but would not necessarily require a navy. To the contrary, an island nation like Japan certainly requires a capable navy above all else, but still requires an air force and army for specific military functions. How does a country defend its society? Is its defense apparatus appropriately aligned to defend it from potential threats? In the case of Japan, can it defend the seas surrounding Japan, are its ground forces located where they will best meet potential threats, and does it have the means to compensate for its gaps in security (i.e. nuclear deterrence or security alliances)? Another basic indicator of a capable military is its force structure: what type of army, navy, and air force does it have? Examining the JSDF in detail, looking at its personnel, weapons systems, and force layout—that is, its order of battle information—will test this. Power projection

outside the boundaries of the state is an indication of fully capable military in the international arena. A military can be capable, but if it lacks the ability to transport forces or sustain operations outside its immediate area of influence, it cannot be considered a *fully* capable military force. Having the latest military technology or the ability to attain new military technology when necessary is another indicator of a fully capable military. But military technology does not stop there: a military force must also have the capacity to use or learn to use new military technology, or else the technology is not at all useful for the purposes for which it is intended. For example, having the latest fighter aircraft is all well and good, but if a military lacks pilots with training on that particular aircraft, then it ultimately lacks the additional capability that fighter aircraft creates. Also, outdated military capabilities from a different era prevent a military from maintaining the pace of development of its potential adversaries. Readiness is another indicator of military capability. When a security crisis convenes, how long does it take and in what capacity does a military operate in the way it was intended? This indicator is tested in different ways, by exploring the exercises a particular military participates in, its past performance in combat operations, if any, and the status and location of forces that could be called upon to respond to threats.

The most significant aim of this research is to determine the true capabilities of the JSDF and then use this assessment to determine how these capabilities realistically shape Japan's involvement in international security affairs. Assessing the capabilities of the JSDF without actually working with them is a difficult task, but I do this using a number of available resources to gain a more complete picture of the overall force.

Through analysis of available academic research on the JSDF and data produced by the Japanese government and other research institutions, I assess the JSDF's strength, size, ability, and, in turn, its overall capability. I anticipated that when we find that sufficient size, spending, and resources are combined with the necessary training and/or operational experience, the capabilities and overall proficiency of the JSDF would be at a much higher level. Previous research on the JSDF analyzes the capability of the overall force by looking some of these areas individually—for example, its flight training hours for fighter pilots or the size of Japan's defense budget—but research is lacking that

combines all of these different areas when assessing the capability of the JSDF. To understand the overall capability of the JSDF, one cannot look at only, say Japan's Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF's) fighter pilots, but also the technology it is using, the amount of money available for improvement of the technology, and the size of the force, in addition to examining the transport capability of ASDF and other capabilities that contribute to the overall capability of the JSDF. Only then can an accurate assessment be made.

I anticipated finding that when either size, strength, and resources or training and/or operational experiences are inadequate, we would find much lower capabilities and overall proficiency of the force. These predictions were certainly realized with regard to the overall capability of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) relative to that of its Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF). The MSDF has had numerous opportunities to train and operate in various environments over the past several decades. This, combined with adequate funding, has led to an extremely capable naval force. To the contrary, the GSDF has had limited experience in live fire exercises, joint exercises, and, certainly, military operations. Even with adequate funding, the limited experience of the GSDF cannot be overcome by spending alone. Achievement in all areas of capability signifies a true military. Underachieving in some areas may not indicate an incapable military overall, but understanding what areas the JSDF does and does not excel in will help determine what kind of security force it is and whether a military relationship is or is not necessary with the U.S.

My hypothesis is that estimates of the actual capabilities of the JSDF are inflated by its overall expenditures on defense, by the size of the force, and, more specifically, its technology. The JSDF has been developing various military systems, including ballistic missile defense systems, E-767 airborne early warning aircraft, F-2 fighters, new helicopter carrying destroyers, and new amphibious landing ships, to name a few.<sup>1</sup> Although these resources certainly appear impressive and have the potential to increase JSDF capabilities, they will not do so if the force does not have the proficiency and

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<sup>1</sup> Janes Intelligence Digest, "Japan's Military Resurgence," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Oct 04, 2000: 1-3.

experience to operate them in austere environments. This is one example of how high expenditures on military equipment may inflate a force's capability in the eyes of outsiders not looking deeply enough. Military expenditures alone are not enough to evaluate the overall capabilities of a country's military. As discussed in the "defense budget" section below, overall military expenditures only tell part of the story on defense spending for the JSDF. When analyzing exactly how much Japan has dedicated to ballistic missile defense and how this affects limited funding for other necessary military capabilities, one realizes that a high level of overall spending does not automatically equal overall increased capability. In addition, when analyzing how much of Japan's defense budget is dedicated to personnel and overall maintenance, one finds that the overall defense budget number only tells part of the story.

In general, countries that have higher military expenditures have greater capabilities, but this is on the surface. Japan is ranked sixth in the world in military expenditures, with approximately \$51 billion spent in 2009.<sup>2</sup> This does not in itself make the JSDF the sixth most proficient or capable military in the world. To estimate a military's capabilities accurately, several variables must be measured concurrently. Therefore, along with military expenditures, I explore where this money is being spent, how the force has evolved over time, and what recent training or operations give the military credibility. My provisional prediction was that in the Japanese case, greater spending on its maritime forces has made the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) more capable than other elements in the JSDF, but only because that spending has been combined with the other previously mentioned criteria; targeted spending, evolution of the force, and operational experience. Determining the actual capabilities of each branch of service allows me to assess the JSDF's capabilities overall.

The final variable I analyze is the operational experience of the JSDF. What missions has the JSDF conducted that demonstrate its capabilities and enable sound predictions of success in future operations? The JSDF has been involved in several

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<sup>2</sup> SIPRI Military Expenditures Database and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *State of World Population 2009: Facing a Changing World—Women, Climate and Population* (UNFPA: New York, 2009), 91.



limited military operations in the past two decades, including maritime minesweeping operations, naval refueling operations, counter-piracy, humanitarian, and disaster relief missions, as well as peacekeeping operations.<sup>3</sup> How many JSDF personnel participated in these operations, and how much does this limited experience carry over to future capabilities for the JSDF? How did the JSDF perform in these past missions, and how may these performances help determine the overall future capabilities of the force? Scholars such as Oros, Tatsumi, and Samuels have highlighted JSDF participation in peacekeeping and disaster relief operations, but, as discussed below, exploring the actual numbers of participants shows that the JSDF has had an extremely limited role in these operations. It was a major step for the JSDF to secure authorization from the government of Japan to participation in these operations at all, but this has led many to overemphasize this involvement and not reveal its limited nature.

After determining the specific capabilities of the JSDF, one can address the first secondary question on a limited basis: is the JSDF a “normal” military? Scholars have debated this topic for many years. What is a normal military? How does one determine what is normal for a security force? Does every state require a normal military, and, if not, what type of security force is required to accomplish the national security demands of the state? By determining the capabilities of the JSDF, we will be able to determine what type of security force the JSDF is and whether this meets the security needs of the government of Japan.

*a. Literature Review on JSDF Capabilities*

There is considerable academic debate on the capabilities of the JSDF. One argument is that the JSDF is a strong military and one of the most professional forces in the world. The other side argues that the strength of the JSDF is nothing more than a façade, clouded by expenditures and U.S. military presence and support. There are multiple arguments along this spectrum of extremes. One aspect of this literature deals with the JSDF’s specific capabilities. This does not appear in the literature as a debate so much as in the form of various discussions on JSDF military expenditures,

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<sup>3</sup> Jane’s Intelligence Digest, “Japan’s Military Resurgence” Oct 2009, 3.

equipment procurement, and operational involvement. Throughout this literature in the past ten years, whether Jane's Defense, Congressional Research Services Reports, or academic work, the consensus is that the JSDF needs to enhance its security apparatus from its current state in order to, independent of the United States, deal with increasing threats from North Korea and the rise of China in regional security affairs.

Jennifer Lind's depiction of JSDF capabilities in "Pacifism or Passing the Buck: Testing Theories of Japanese Security Policy" is the one of the most useful academic works (that it is also one of the most influential, cited in many other academic pieces on the capabilities of the JSDF, makes it even more noteworthy here).<sup>4</sup> Lind argues that the GSDF lacks in both offensive and defensive capability and that the MSDF is the strongest branch of the JSDF. On these two arguments, Lind and I agree, but we differ on much of the rest. Lind uses defense spending—one of the indicators I and others scholars use as well—as a means to determine JSDF capabilities, and uses other means of determining military capabilities, such as number of aircraft and pilot flight hours, to determine air capabilities. Lind's argument is that the ASDF is one of the most capable air forces in the world, based on statistics on the number of aircraft in the ASDF arsenal and its pilots' flight hours. But she fails to look at the complete picture of military spending, personnel, equipment, procurement and acquisitions, training, and operations. A complete look at these variables will better determine JSDF capabilities. Lind's research was done in the early 2000s and therefore also fails to explain how the ASDF F-2 and F-15 are older-generation aircraft that without replacement will soon be obsolete to potential adversaries in the region. At that time, the need to replace these aging aircraft was not as urgent as it is today, but her research has been cited as late as 2010 as a tool for proving the high level of capabilities of the ASDF.<sup>5</sup> Lind also states that the ASDF is limited by its lack of precision-guided munitions on its fighter aircraft but regards this as an insignificant issue. Precision-guided munitions are necessary for modern warfare by elite militaries. Precision-guided munitions were considered by some

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<sup>4</sup> Jennifer M. Lind. "Pacifism or Passing the Buck? Testing the Theories of Japanese Security Policy." *International Security* (The MIT Press) 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004): 98.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch: Japan*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010, 50.

experts to be a revolution in military affairs that changed the way modern aerial battles would be waged.<sup>6</sup> This limited capability would significantly hinder Japan's military capabilities in a conflict with any potential enemy in Northeast Asia. This thesis does not necessarily contradict Lind's research or conclusions, but it adds more valuable information to the JSDF capability discussion, so that a more complete conclusion can be drawn and more current research is available as reference for future work.

Another approach taken in the literature on JSDF capabilities looks closely at hardware. Christopher Hughes has written several pieces on Japan's remilitarization and rightly focuses on "qualitative improvement of [the JSDF's] military capabilities" rather than the size of the JSDF or its overall budget.<sup>7</sup> Hughes goes on to analyze JSDF military capabilities through assessments of its various technological hardware acquisitions. He explores weapon systems acquired or cancelled by all the branches of the JSDF, including the issues with the F-22, the development of the BMD program, and acquisition of the KC-767 tanker aircraft, to name a few.<sup>8</sup> But while Hughes is looking extensively at weapons systems and technology, he fails to assess JSDF ability to use the weapon systems it acquires and does not take into account what training or operational experience the JSDF has with each weapons system. Hughes certainly falls into the category of analyst that believes enhanced military technology equals increased military capability. Military technology certainly can increase a military's capability, but its ability to use a technology through training and operational experience truly increases capability.

Some scholars argue that Japan is taking a more assertive role in the security environment and throwing off the shackles of its pacifist constitution because of the external threats posed by North Korea and China. Denny Roy uses the overall defense budget of Japan to explain its expanded power and capability in a similar fashion

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<sup>6</sup> David Shambaugh. "Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects," Berkeley: University of California Press (2002), 82–87.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Hughes. "Chapter Two: Japan's Military Doctrine, Expenditure and Power Projection," Adelphi Papers (2008), 48: 403, 40.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Hughes. "Chapter Two: Japan's Military Doctrine, Expenditure and Power Projection," Adelphi Papers (2008), 48: 403, 40–51.

to Lind, but Roy's analysis is significantly lacking compared to Lind's. Roy highlights the areas in which Japan has expanded in recent year—for example, UN peacekeeping, surveillance satellites, and its acquisition of aerial refueling tankers—but gives no detailed analysis of the areas in which the JSDF still lacks capabilities or still depends on the United States for its defense and maintains a defensive posture.<sup>9</sup> It is easy to point out the areas of expansion the JSDF has incorporated into its defense policies over the last two decades, but it is entirely different to analyze in detail the areas that have been enhanced, as well as the areas that still lag behind and what this holistic analysis means for Japanese security. Roy's is another example of analysis that is limited in which the capabilities of the JSDF are used to exploit an assertion that it is becoming a true military and changing its overall defense posture.

This thesis also aims to help provide a broader set of security scholars with better evidence on which to base JSDF-related claims. In "The Future of the American Pacifier," for example, John Mearsheimer theorizes about future security dilemmas that could arise in Northeast Asia if the U.S. no longer maintains the presence it has for the past half century. Mearsheimer does not falsely describe the JSDF or conduct a limited analysis of the JSDF, but describes potential options in Northeast Asia where Japan would take a more active and assertive role in the security of the region. He writes that if "the U.S. brings its troops home. Japan would then almost surely establish itself as a great power, building its own nuclear deterrent and significantly increasing the size of its conventional forces."<sup>10</sup> Mearsheimer does not say specifically how the JSDF would have to "increase the size of its conventional forces," though, and a more thorough understanding of the current state of the JSDF and its ability to change quickly would certainly benefit from more thorough analyses of the capabilities and future potential power of the JSDF.

Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports also provide detailed description on various JSDF capabilities, such as ballistic missile defense, and

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<sup>9</sup> Denny Roy. "Stirring Samurai, Disapproving Dragon: Japan's Growing Security Activity and Sino-Japan Relations." *Asian Affairs* (Heldref Publications) 31, no. 4 (2004): 87–89.

<sup>10</sup> John J. Mearsheimer. "The Future of the American Pacifier." *Foreign Affairs* (Council on Foreign Relations) 80, no. 5 (2001): 55–56.

operational experience, such as international peace and humanitarian operations.<sup>11</sup> These reports are extremely useful with regard to the current military systems the JSDF currently has and intends to acquire and past and future operations conducted or planned. Here, again, though, very little attention is given to details on different aspects of the capabilities of the JSDF. The reports highlight areas of the JSDF that have the greatest impact on the U.S.-Japan alliance rather than giving detailed accounts of actual capabilities.

*Jane's Defence Weekly*, meanwhile, provides information of various types on JSDF capabilities and operations. An article published in 2000 argued that Japan's military is gaining momentum and increasing its capabilities and that Japan is increasing the capacity of its military in response to China's expansionism. The article focuses specifically about the MSDF's increasing capabilities, its participation in training exercises like RIMPAC 2000 off Hawaii, and other training exercises with other Asian and European navies.<sup>12</sup> Another *Jane's Defence Weekly* report gives an assessment of the JSDF compared to the US military, stating, "the gap between the United States and Japan (in terms of military capabilities) has been widening. By establishing a joint environment, and conducting actual operations, we will learn what is lacking in the Self-Defense Force."<sup>13</sup> *Jane's Defence Weekly* is an extremely useful tool in determining specific capabilities of military forces, including the JSDF, but it rarely offers a comprehensive study on all of the JSDF capabilities at once. Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2011 (approved on 17 December 2010) is helpful in understanding the future intentions of the JSDF, it lists two of Japan's main security environment issues as follows: "1) North Korea's nuclear and missile issues are immediate and grave destabilizing factors to regional security and 2) military modernization by China and its insufficient transparency are of concern for the regional

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<sup>11</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Weston S. Konishi. "The Changing U.S.-Japan Alliance: Implications for U.S. Interests." CRS, Congressional Research Service, Washington DC, (2009): 23, 9–11.

<sup>12</sup> Janes Intelligence Digest, "Japan's Military Resurgence," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Oct 04, 2000: 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Karniol, "Japan's Joint Approach," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, May 08, 2003: 1–4.

and global community.”<sup>14</sup> Japan has made it quite clear over the last decade it is focusing its defense priorities and capabilities at potential threats from North Korea, as well as China.

An academic analysis by Glen D. Hook similar to this thesis, but written twenty-three years focuses more on changes in the pacifist norms in Japan rather than specifically Japanese military capabilities. Hook’s analysis is one of the few scholarly works of this type that focuses on how various factors impact the capabilities of the JSDF. Hook does not examine the capabilities, but focuses on the issues that affect JSDF capabilities. Hook does analyze the impact of Japan’s history on the JSDF, as well as its relationship with the U.S. He also examines external threats to Japan, Japan’s non-nuclear principles, its ban on arms exports, its defense budget, and some JSDF capabilities.<sup>15</sup> Hook’s overall analysis lacks the thorough examination done in this thesis.

More recently, scholars have continued the debate about the JSDF and the overall security system, implying Japan is capable of operating independent of the United States but also needs to expand, improve, and enhance its capabilities—but without looking directly at the JSDF’s capabilities before offering these arguments. Political leaders in Japan have called for a more equal approach to the alliance and for putting Japan on equal footing with the U.S. In February 2009 Ichiro Ozawa, then President of the Democratic Party of Japan, stated the only U.S. military presence needed for security in East Asia was the U.S. Navy’s 7th Fleet.<sup>16</sup> These remarks have been interpreted as advocating a complete withdrawal of American ground troops in Japan and implying that the JSDF could provide all remaining security needs for Japan. In what areas the JSDF needs to expand is not specified in much of the literature, and this is something this thesis will examine. In 2003 Peter Katzenstein wrote that September 11, 2001 “provided another welcome opportunity for gradually expanding the regional scope of operations of

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<sup>14</sup> Japan’s National Defense Program Guidelines FY 2011, Ministry of Defense, 17 December 2010, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Glenn D. Hook. "The Erosion of Anti-Militaristic Principles in Contemporary Japan." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 25, no. 4 (1988): 381–393.

<sup>16</sup> Weston S. Konishi. "Japan’s Historic 2009 Elections: Implications for U.S. Interests." CRS, Congressional Research Service, Washington DC, (2009): 6.

Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF). It also afforded Japan a chance to improve slightly its previously inadequate preparation for situations of national emergency."<sup>17</sup> Earlier, in another piece, Katzenstein and Okawara wrote, "the Japanese military is no longer viewed as a pariah and is evidently experiencing a process of normalization."<sup>18</sup> Some scholars have taken a more pessimistic view of the JSDF. Eugene Matthews writes in 2003 that "although Japan does have its SDF and the fourth-largest military budget in the world, its armed services are unimpressive and weak, even compared to those of some of its neighbors."<sup>19</sup> These scholars and others have varying opinions of the capability of the JSDF. This thesis aims to adjudicate that debate and determine the JSDF's true capabilities.

As is evident from the above information and other sources not mentioned,<sup>20</sup> there are numerous assessments on the capabilities of the JSDF, but none are as comprehensive as this thesis is or they are out of date and need to be replaced with current information. Lind comes closest to an accurate analysis of the JSDF but does not go far enough. This thesis aims to offer a more complete depiction of the JSDF and provides a basis for the ongoing debate about the future intentions of Japan in the international security community.

## **2. How Do the Capabilities of the JSDF Affect U.S. Japan Relations?**

An accurate assessment of the capabilities of the JSDF is important for many reasons. For those interested in Japan's role in the international security environment, this thesis offers a surer understanding of what the JSDF can and cannot do, of what the JSDF can handle independent of U.S. forces, and what current options exist for Japan. The specific capabilities of the GSDF, ASDF, and MSDF, as well as BMD, all affect

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<sup>17</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein. "Same War: Different Views: Germany, Japan, and Counterterrorism." *International Organization* (Cambridge University Press) 57, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 731–760.

<sup>18</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara. "Japan, Asian-Pacific Security, and the Case for Analytical Eclecticism." *International Security* (The MIT Press) 26, no. 3 (Winter 2001-2002): 156.

<sup>19</sup> Eugene A. Matthews. "Japan's New Nationalism." *Foreign Affairs* (Council on Foreign Relations) 82, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 2003): 79.

<sup>20</sup> For similar discussions see Hook 1988, Kawashima 2005, Midford 2003, and Pyle 2007.

U.S. Japan relations differently.<sup>21</sup> The capabilities or the lack thereof, of the, GSDF have an impact on the presence of ground forces in Japan. Even with a ground invasion of Japan highly unlikely, confidence in the ability to deter a ground invasion is something the U.S. Marine Corps provides Japan through its presence in Okinawa. The inability of the GSDF to currently fill that role strengthens the U.S.-Japan alliance and the need for the U.S. Marine Corps to maintain a presence in Japan. Conversely, if and when the GSDF is capable of filling that role, the necessity of the Marines may be called into question even more than they currently are. The ASDF has ties with the U.S. Air Force through the procurement of aircraft from American manufacturer and the enhanced training it receives from the U.S. Air Force also affects the relationship. The elimination of the F-22 as a future aircraft for the U.S. Air Force also impacts the relationship. If a replacement aircraft is not contracted through the alliance, it could certainly have an impact on the strategic relationship. The MSDF has strong ties to the U.S. Navy, but its ability to operate independent of the U.S. and the force's overall excellent capabilities could call into question the presence of the 7th Fleet in Japan. This is also unlikely, because the MSDF has had its current high level of capability for some time and this has not had a negative impact on the alliance. BMD is the most significant relationship connection currently for the United States and Japan. The development of the joint system and its continued emphasis on integration and interoperability has strengthened the alliance and will continue to for years into the future. For Japanese and American policymakers, this assessment of the JSDF may better equip them to determine more accurately what areas of the alliance need to be strengthened through procurement, training, exercises, and potential joint missions. In addition, it may lead both countries' policymakers to think twice about weakening an alliance that has been mutually beneficial for so long.

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<sup>21</sup> BMD is granted its own section because it incorporates the capabilities of both the ASDF and MSDF. BMD is also a very significant program within Japan's overall defense structure, receiving its own significant portion of Japan's defense budget.



*a. Literature Review on U.S. Japan Relations*

The debate most frequently found in academic literature is on the future intentions of the JSDF, with the capabilities of the force a variable in the discussion. Authors focus on Japan's future intentions, while very infrequently giving detailed attention to the true capabilities of the JSDF. The debate about future intentions of the JSDF is the more prominent of the two main strands of the literature on the JSDF. Because of the unique nature of the JSDF and Japan's national security affairs as a whole, this debate has gone on for some time. Since the end of World War II, Japan has been under the security umbrella of the United States. This is partly due to Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution, which states the Japanese "forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." Because of this Article, put in place by American occupiers, even the presence of the standing military is disputed in Japan. When the JSDF was developed, it was considered a police force and was created strictly as an institution for self-defense, not one for use as an offensive force. Since the founding of the JSDF and through its evolution, the debate as to what its role in the international community would be has been engaged in by scholars of international relations. Scholars such as Ezra Vogel and Chalmers Johnson have debated the future of Japan in regional and international security affairs since the late 1960s. Johnson wrote in 1972 that "Japan is dependent upon, and committed to, maintaining her defense against China's growing nuclear strength via the American 'nuclear umbrella.' However, to the extent that the Japanese-American security treaty becomes less credible in Japanese eyes, the Japanese government will be forced to find some other way to provide for a non-nuclear nation in a nuclear world."<sup>22</sup> Vogel makes a pointed argument for Japan's limited involvement in international security affairs by emphasizing the economic benefits achieved by both Japan and the United States that were made possible by Japan's reduced military involvement. "Many Americans believe that Japan enjoys a 'free ride,' taking commercial advantage of opportunities provided by a stable world maintained largely at American expense.

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<sup>22</sup> Chalmers Johnson. "How China and Japan See Each Other." *Foreign Affairs* (Council on Foreign Relations) 50, no. 4 (July 1972): 721.

Japanese, however, argue that they pay for their own military defense and contribute substantially to America's forces in Japan, thus freeing the United States to concentrate its energies elsewhere."<sup>23</sup>

The debate about what role Japan should take in international affairs expanded immediately following the Cold War. Many inquired about the utility or necessity of having large military bases abroad such as the kind the United States had in Japan after the threat of war had subsided in the post Cold War environment. The debate was framed as follows in Japan: if it were no longer necessary for the United States to keep thousands of troops in Japan, but Japan also continued to need these forces for its general self-defense, what would be the result if the United States left Japan? Thomas U. Berger wrote in 1993, "this changing international security environment thus raises the question whether Japan, having been an economic rival of the United States, may not in the future become a military competitor as well; whether, after having adopted a pacifist stance for half a century, Japan may choose to unsheathe its sword once again."<sup>24</sup> Although Berger raised the question, he also argued that "in the short to medium term it is unlikely that Japan will become a major military power." Some scholars like Peter Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara present both sides of the debate:

optimists insist that the Asian balance of power and the US-Japan relationship will make Japan aspire to be a competitive, noninterventionist trading state that heeds the universal interest of peace and profit rather than narrow aspirations for national power. Pessimists warn us instead that the new international system will finally confirm Herman Kahn's prediction of 1970: Japan will quickly change to the status of a nuclear superpower, spurred perhaps by what some see as a dangerous rise of Japanese militarism in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>25</sup>

In 1994, Denny Roy debated who would dominate the East Asian region as the new regional hegemon replacing the Soviet Union after the end of the Cold War.

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<sup>23</sup> Ezra F. Vogel. "Pax Nipponica?" *Foreign Affairs* (Council on Foreign Relations) 64, no. 4 (Spring 1986): 755.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas U. Berger. "From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-militarism." *International Security* (The MIT Press) 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993): 119.

<sup>25</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara. "Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms, and Policies." *International Security* (The MIT Press) 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993): 84.

In this debate, he claimed that Japan's military weakness would not allow it to take on regional leadership in security and he fails to address how the United States in its alliance with Japan and other East Asian countries could take on this role. Roy's conclusions themselves are not as relevant here as that his assumptions about the future role of Japan in regional security affairs are grounded in only limited attention to the true capabilities of Japan's defense apparatus.<sup>26</sup> Chalmers Johnson also examined the future role of Japan after the end of the Cold War and its relationship with the United States. He argued that the relationship or alliance between the two countries has led Japan to become "an economic giant and a political pygmy."<sup>27</sup> The United States created an anti-militaristic Japan by shaming it into its pacifist constitution, providing its security, and requiring Japan to bear a majority of the financial burden in keeping U.S. military forces in Japan throughout the Cold War and after. Johnson assessed why the relationship between the two countries is not normal and would have a hard time obtaining normality unless Japan were allowed to do so by Washington. Understanding the changes made to the JSDF and overall Japanese security over the twenty years since this article was written clearly point to Japan's pursuit of normality and the evolution of the U.S. Japan relationship as a result.

Other scholars and political leaders have discussed the future role of Japan in East Asian security coming out of the Cold War. East Asian specialists Michael Green, Richard Samuels, Andrew Oros, and Yuki Tatsumi have written books on the future of the alliance. Others in Japan such as Yutaka Kawashima and Yoichi Funabashi have also published books on the evolving alliance and where the two countries are moving in the future.<sup>28</sup> The works of Samuels, Oros, and Tatsumi give significant accounts of the political history and changes in the U.S. Japan relationship and also make note of significant advancements in military technology and the changes in security

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<sup>26</sup> Denny Roy. "Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security." *International Security* (The MIT Press) 19, no. 1 (1994): 163–168.

<sup>27</sup> Chalmers Johnson. "Japan in Search of a "Normal" Role." *Daedalus* (The MIT Press) 121, no. 4 (1992): 17.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Green (Reluctant Realism), Richard Samuels (Securing Japan), Andrews Oros and Yuki Tatsumi (Global Security Watch: Japan), Yutaka Kawashima (Japanese Foreign Policy at a Crossroads), Yoichi Funabashi (Alliance Adrift).

activity by the JSDF. These writers certainly address military capability, but not as their main focus. All three rely upon Lind to determine the capabilities of the JSDF, and all would be enhanced by a more detailed understanding of JSDF capabilities. Kawashima dedicates a chapter of his book on Japanese foreign policy to the security ties of the United States and Japan, and a subsection of which focuses on the changing role of the JSDF, but nowhere in his book is an analysis of the capabilities of the JSDF conducted. In *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, Michael Green makes predictions about the future of the U.S.-Japan alliance, but never incorporates the capabilities of the JSDF as a factor. It is obvious that the future of the alliance is very much of interest to many scholars, political leaders, and others, but the capabilities of the JSDF often factor very little into their assessments.<sup>29</sup>

## **B. ORIGINAL EXPECTATIONS**

I expected to find that the JSDF was a developing force, slowly gaining more experience and proficiency over the past twenty years. I anticipated finding that the JSDF was more capable in specific maritime capabilities in which they have a proven track record and in an expanded portfolio of military operations, such as refueling and minesweeping operations. Other areas of increasing capabilities would certainly include humanitarian aid and disaster relief, where Washington has encouraged the JSDF to expand its operations and Tokyo has the will to allow this expansion. I also anticipated that high-technology military capabilities should be developing rapidly in Japan, as this is an expertise of Japan's workforce at large and should enable increased capability in the JSDF. I did not expect that my research would suggest a major shift in the security alliance between the United States and Japan in the immediate future or that the U.S. military would not remain in Japan for the next decade and beyond.

I have found that many of my assumptions were correct, but also incomplete. The JSDF has a vast array of capabilities and is developing more in various different areas. The MSDF is certainly the most capable of the three branches of the JSDF, followed by

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<sup>29</sup> For further information see Samuels 2007, Oros 2010, Tatsumi 2008, Green 2003, Kawashima 2003, and Funabashi 1999.

the ASDF and then the GSDF. The thesis shows that the JSDF's areas of expertise are logical and often meet what Japan demands of its security force to meet the threats it faces now and will continue to face in the near future. Although the JSDF is building peacekeeping and humanitarian aid/disaster relief capabilities, its experience in these arenas is much more limited than originally expected. I anticipated the JSDF would have a certain level of capability in advanced technology, but found no noticeable difference between Japan and other militaries. In fact, the JSDF is having trouble eliminating Cold War and conventional weapons from its arsenal when its current threat calls for reductions in these areas. I still do not assess that there will be a major shift in the U.S.-Japan alliance in the near future. Areas of research that were outside the scope of this thesis, but that certainly impact the capabilities of the JSDF and the future of the alliance, include the political relationship between the Ministry of Defense and the ruling political party in Japan, the domestic perceptions of the JSDF, the presence of the U.S. military in Japan, and how Japan's economic successes and failures impact the JSDF.

### **C. THESIS OVERVIEW**

To better understand the capabilities of the JSDF, it is useful to analyze the history of the JSDF and how it has evolved into the force it is today. The second chapter of this thesis provides a historical review of the JSDF. Examinations of the origins of the JSDF and of the political and international factors that have influenced the force assess the actions and even the limitations of the JSDF now. The history of national security in Japan may have more impact on the current force than any other military force in the world. Japan's history of imperialism and its experiences in World War II still shape public perception of the JSDF and affects policy decisions today.

The origins of Japan's international security policy is rooted in Article Nine of the Japanese constitution, and defense decisions are still affected by the constraints put on Japanese defense policymakers. For example, Japan's ballistic missile defense program was controversial because it threatened to violate Japan's commitment to refraining from

collective self-defense.<sup>30</sup> Japan's participation in UN peacekeeping operations and its involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom are perceived by many to violate the Japanese Constitution. It is helpful to understand how the JSDF has slowly adjusted to being an international force and how the evolution has occurred over time and been affected by various factors. Change has mostly occurred in the last three decades, but the speed at which Japan is able to make changes is better understood with an understanding the history of the JSDF.<sup>31</sup>

One area that gets attention in international security affairs is Japan's recent surge in participation in international peacekeeping and humanitarian aid/disaster relief operations. This participation needs to be analyzed further, as the JSDF involvement has been publicized, but the form of participation and its performance in these operations is often overlooked or not examined closely enough. What specific form of participation did the JSDF take in these various operations, how large was its participation, and what impact does this have on its future capabilities? This thesis assesses all of these questions and illuminates what the JSDF's role may be with regard to the United States, the region, and the international community.

Chapter III is a statistical analysis of the JSDF using resources such as the Japanese Ministry of Defense documents, Jane's Defense information, international think tank resources, and other academic and government reports with statistical data on the strength and structure of the JSDF. These statistics provide a quantitative approach to the capacity of the JSDF comparing it to other professional militaries in the international community. This analysis includes commentary on how these comparisons affect capability and is the most important information provided in this study. In addition to examining the order of battle of the JSDF, an examination of the defense budget will be conducted, allowing for a greater understanding of how money is spent on defense in Japan.

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<sup>30</sup> Umemoto Tetsuya, "Japan-U.S. Cooperation in Ballistic Missile Defense," U.S. Japan Track II Meeting on Arms Control, Disarmament, Nonproliferation, and Verification, Washington, DC, 27–28 March 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (2007), 93.

The final chapter builds upon the previous three chapters' analysis of the actual capabilities of the JSDF and uses this information to determine the impact these capabilities have on Japan's relationship with the United States, the overarching security alliance, and its involvement in international security affairs over the next decade. This chapter presents a summary of the overall capabilities of the JSDF, as well as additional information on the subject and future areas of concern or needing attention.

## **II. HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCE**

Over the last half century Japan has played a significant role economically in Asia and globally. Japan has the third largest economy in the world, is an influential force in the global economy, and is a strong ally of the United States. For much of this time, the JSDF has taken a back seat to other militaries in the region and throughout the world. Though the JSDF's participation in international security has increased dramatically in the past two decades, how much it has evolved and how it might perform in different environments is still unclear. Prior to the Persian Gulf War in 1990, the JSDF had very limited international operational experience. Since 1990, the JSDF has been involved in maritime minesweeping operations in the Persian Gulf. It has engaged in peacekeeping operations in Cambodia in 1991, Mozambique in 1993 and East Timor in 2002. It has participated in humanitarian/disaster relief operations in Iraq in 2004 and Indonesia in 2005, and it is currently involved in counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia.<sup>32</sup> But there is much speculation about the overall military capabilities of the JSDF, partly because of its limited exposure in combat, peacekeeping, and humanitarian missions. Its performance in these environments will affect the options open to American decision makers and the role Japan can play in the strategic alliance. Understanding the history and evolution of the JSDF is as important as understanding the current state of the force because it aids in determining what the Force was meant to do and how that impacts its current and future capabilities. A number of the JSDF's more recent operations are discussed as a part of this history section because they are continuations of past operations, such as UN PKO or HA/DR. These operations constitute the JSDF's history because many of them do not significantly impact the current state of the JSDF given their numbers of participants or the number of years since those operations.

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<sup>32</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Weston S. Konishi. "The Changing U.S.-Japan Alliance: Implications for U.S. Interests." CRS, Congressional Research Service, Washington DC, 2009, 8–11.



## A. POST-WORLD WAR II

The initial form of the JSDF was established in 1950 under the authorization of General Douglas MacArthur, USA, during the Allied occupation of Japan, but it was first known as the National Police Reserve (NPR). The NPR was renamed a Security Force in 1952 and once again changed in 1954 to the Japanese Self-Defense Force. This final naming was authorized under the auspices of the 1954 Self-Defense Forces Law; the Japanese Defense Agency was also established through the passage of this law.<sup>33</sup>

After the establishment of the JSDF in the 1950s, the awkward military/police institution had limited involvement in either domestic or international operations. Throughout the Cold War, much of Japan, let alone the rest of world, had limited knowledge of the force's existence or purpose. It was during the early periods of its existence of the JSDF that policy decisions were made that still impact the role of the JSDF today. These early decisions affected the strategic "pacifist" culture of Japan, causing policymakers often to address a constituency that believes Japan has forever renounced the right of war and that any decision that contradicts this belief is not only politically wrong but also illegal.

The first and most constraining post-World War II decision that still affects Japanese decision making and the JSDF was the establishment of the Japanese Constitution. Article Nine of the constitution, as stated previously, renounces war, the right of Japan to go to war, and the right to prepare the means to go to war. The constitution was imposed on the Japanese government by the Allied occupation force and was written in such a way as to keep Japan from remilitarizing after the war and to keep it a pacifist country for the years to follow.<sup>34</sup> Article Nine has an enormous impact on Japanese national security decision making, including what weapons Japan can procure,

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<sup>33</sup> Yuki Tatsumi. *Japan's National Security Policy Infrastructure: Can Tokyo Meet Washington's Expectations?* (Washington: Stimson, 2008): 65–66.

<sup>34</sup> Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (2007), 38–39.

who it can sell weapons to, what operations and exercises the JSDF can participate in, and how it determines its rules of engagement for every defense action it encounters, among other aspects.

During the years following the end of the Allied occupation, Japan wanted to focus its national efforts on economic recovery and growth, while relying on the U.S. for all of its national security needs. This policy became known as the “Yoshida Doctrine,” named after Shigeru Yoshida, the Prime Minister of Japan responsible for leading his country out of the Allied occupation and setting the stage for economic prosperity. The “Yoshida Doctrine” led to one of the greatest economic rises in modern history through a focus on export trade policy and advanced technology. “Japan’s exports experienced a 114-fold increase from 1955 to 1987.”<sup>35</sup> Economic prosperity changed Japan’s place in the international community, but it did not change its desire to remain a pacifist state, a desire that remains even to this day for many Japanese. Instead, Japan used its financial might to help fund international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank. Japan also used its financial success to dispense foreign aid at levels that were not equaled by any other nation.<sup>36</sup>

Another institution born out of this era that impacts Japanese security policy today is the U.S.-Japan alliance itself. The fundamentals of Japanese security policy are impacted by the constitution, but no other institution or structure from this timeframe impacts decision making today more. The U.S. had three main objectives in signing a security treaty with Japan. The first objective was to keep Japan down militarily and prevent any additional post-war action. The second objective was to build stability in Japan so that it could function without too much support from the U.S. The third

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<sup>35</sup> Kenneth Pyle. *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007): 256–257.

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth Pyle. *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007): 257–259.

objective was a part of the U.S.' overall containment policy towards communism. The U.S. wanted to prevent Japan from aligning with the Soviet Union and endangering markets of strategic interest to the U.S.<sup>37</sup>

The objectives of the original security treaty still impact the relationship today. Even after the end of the Cold War, with the threat from communism gone, the U.S. has used its presence in Japan to protect its economic and security interests in the region. The U.S. presence impacts the development of the JSDF and the need to develop its capabilities. The first of objective, keeping Japan militarily pacified, created a strategic culture in Japan that has been pervasive in Japanese decision making throughout the last 60 years. The long-term pacifist nature of Japan may not have been the objective during this time, but it certainly impacts the role the Japanese people feel the JSDF should play internationally.

Japan hoped the UN could one day provide security for the pacifist state, but, understanding it did not have this capability early in the Cold War, it had to turn to the U.S. to provide its security. Japan and the U.S. first signed a security agreement in 1951 while the U.S. was still occupying Japan. This agreement was not popular in Japan because it requested the U.S. to station troops in Japan, but also allowed these troops to use these bases as a launching point to conduct security operations throughout the region. This arrangement was not in the best interest of Japan: a military force residing in Japan and conducting military operations in areas Japan had once attempted to colonize or control did not achieve the level of pacifism or neutrality the Japanese people were looking for. The security treaty was renegotiated in 1960 and a more fair agreement was signed. This agreement, like the original, called for the U.S. military to defend Japan if attacked and only required the JSDF to provide basic national defense for Japan in the case of an attack.<sup>38\</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (2007), 39–45.

<sup>38</sup> Yuki Tatsumi. *Japan's National Security Policy Infrastructure: Can Tokyo Meet Washington's Expectations?* (Washington: Stimson, 2008): 12–13.

Other policies coming out of this time that affect the JSDF include its prohibition against collective defense and the acquisition of nuclear capabilities. The debate over collective self-defense began with the creation of the JSDF in the 1950s. With Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution renouncing war and military build-up as a right of the state, how could the JSDF be authorized? It was decided that although the constitution denied Japan the right of military force, it was not denied the right to defend itself if attacked by an external aggressor. This provided the justification for the existence of the JSDF. But the constitution does outlaw the right of Japan to use military force as a means to resolve international disputes, and this forbids Japan from engaging in collective self-defense.<sup>39</sup> This determination has remained within Japan since the 1950s and affects policy decisions today. The most contentious issue today is related to Ballistic Missile Defense, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

The U.S.-Japan Cooperative Agreement on Nuclear Power in 1955 established that Japan would not seek nuclear power for military means, but would only use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. This policy stance has been renewed by prime ministers and political leaders in Japan since 1955 and is unlikely to change. Japan has the benefit of being under the U.S. nuclear umbrella and is therefore able to abide by its anti-militaristic principles and place its often-pacifist citizens.<sup>40</sup>

Only in the 1970s, when the U.S. began to alter its overseas military commitment, was the Japanese security apparatus forced to increase its capabilities, as well as its potential involvement in international security affairs. The U.S., reeling from the Vietnam War and experiencing a lull in Cold War tensions with the Soviet Union, began to draw down its military presence in Asia and the other parts of the globe. The U.S. also insisted that its allies maintain a certain level of self-defense capability and not rely solely on the U.S. military for their national security. This policy change would affect the JSDF, its future force structure, and even the Japanese government's attitude toward the force overall.

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<sup>39</sup> Yuki Tatsumi. *Japan's National Security Policy Infrastructure: Can Tokyo Meet Washington's Expectations?* (Washington: Stimson, 2008): 16.

<sup>40</sup> Tatsumi. *Japan's National Security Policy Infrastructure*,: 18.

## B. JSDF BUILD-UP

Starting in 1976, first with the Basic Defense Capability and then the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO), the posture and purpose of the Japanese security apparatus and the JSDF began to shift. During the 1980s, the Japanese government began to expand the JSDF and increase defense spending in order to support US efforts in the region and take on some of the burden for security as the U.S. began to focus on other regions of the world. The 1976 NDPO altered the future course of the JSDF and what role it would play in international and domestic security affairs. The outline describes a JSDF that is

equipped with various functions that are necessary for defense, well-balanced in its organization and deployment including its logistical support system, and [...] capable of providing sufficient defense during peacetime, responding effectively to limited and small-scale invasion, and being deployable for disaster relief and other missions that could contribute to the stability of public livelihood.<sup>41</sup>

“The NDPO initiated the build-up in JSDF personnel and equipment that occurred during the late 1970s and early 1980s that led to 200,000 plus self-defense force with specific state of the art equipment.”<sup>42</sup>

Japan’s defensive and even pacifist posture was the norm from the end of the occupation until the late 1970s. During this time, the JSDF was an emergency response organization, only called to act during an invasion or times of severe crisis. The U.S. military would handle any national security threat for Japan and the JSDF would stay out of the way. Japan resisted even designating any potential enemies during this time. “It was not until 1980 that the Soviet Union was officially named a threat to Japan in official Japanese documents.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> National Defense Program Outline, Japan Defense Agency, October 29, 1976, <http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/docs/19761029.O1E.html> (accessed 1 February 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Yuki Tatsumi. *Japan’s National Security Policy Infrastructure: Can Tokyo Meet Washington’s Expectations?* Washington, DC, Stimson (2008): 20.

<sup>43</sup> Glenn D. Hook. “The Erosion of Anti-Militaristic Principles in Contemporary Japan.” *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 25, no. 4 (1988): 383.

## **C. THE END OF THE COLD WAR**

The end of the Cold War initiated significant change in the security environment in East Asia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the most prolific threat to Japanese security, as well as the rest of East Asia, was no longer present. This altered the overall environment, as the US began a large-scale downsizing of forces in the region, causing Japan to re-focus its security plans for the immediate future. Also, the international security environment changed at this time with regard to the way wars were coordinated, fought, and financed. A greater dependence on international coalitions was the norm in international security relations, focused upon the conduct of the United Nations; one can also point to the U.S.-led effort in the Persian Gulf War. Japan was an economic leader in the international community, but in order to be seen as a true leader, it would have to participate in security affairs as well. The JSDF would change its core mission, defense of the homeland, and begin focusing on humanitarian aid/disaster relief, international peacekeeping operations, and increased participation in maritime operations. As the JSDF changed its mission, what would it look like in these operations? Would the transformation from a pacifist institution based on self-defense to a normal military force occur? As the JSDF participated in international operations and even combat zones, how limited would its participation be?

### **1. Humanitarian Aid/Disaster Relief**

Many scholars have focused on the operations of the JSDF in the post-Cold War era as a signal of changing trends and enhanced capabilities in Japanese security. And although significant changes have occurred, deeper analysis of JSDF participation in Humanitarian Aid/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) operations must be conducted. The JSDF began participating in international HA/DR operations from September to December 1994 with its relief of Rwandan refugees. Two different types of units were employed in this operation; refugee relief and airlifting units. A total of 401 JSDF personnel were used during this three-month deployment. The number of participants can be considered significant, but the length of the deployment is not. As this is the first international HA/DR operation the JSDF participated in, the number of troops and duration of

deployment is not as significant as their mere presence in the operation. But in Japan's later involvement in HA/DR operations, the number of supporting personnel and the duration of deployments decreases. One hundred and thirteen JSDF personnel supported the three-month East Timor relief mission from November 1999 to February 2000. In October 2001, 138 airlifting personnel participated in refugee relief operations in Afghanistan. In April 2003, a smaller contingent of JSDF airlifting personnel (56) supported relief operations in Iraq. Finally, an additional 104 JSDF troops supported another Iraqi refugee relief operation from July to August 2003. This totals 813 JSDF troops with HA/DR experience from 1994 to 2005.<sup>44</sup> Although this contribution is symbolically significant in international security affairs for Japan, it does not create tremendous experience for an institution such as the JSDF, which is considered by scholars like Lind, Tatsumi, and Oros to be the world leader. Although these operations give the JSDF experience in international settings, it does not give them combat experience that other militaries receive when participating in international conflicts as a part of coalitions.

## **2. Peacekeeping Operations**

The JSDF began participating in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) in 1992. This was a monumental change for the JSDF, which had not participated in any significant international security cooperation missions since the end of World War II. JSDF PKO participation started with three electoral observers' being sent to the United Nations Angola Verification Mission II. This step was small in terms of the impact it had on that particular operation, but enormous in the possibilities it opened for the JSDF in the future.

The next opportunity the JSDF had to participate in a UN mission came in Cambodia in 1992. The UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was the first large-scale international operation the JSDF contributed to with its military forces. Military observers, civilian police, engineering forces, and electoral observers all took

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<sup>44</sup> Record of Japan's International Peace Cooperation and Activities, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/pamph2005-2.pdf> (accessed 28 December 2010).

part, the largest contingent being the 600 troop-size engineering unit. In all, 1,332 JSDF personnel participated in UNTAC, giving the JSDF much-needed experience and a new degree of capability in international security affairs.

After UNTAC, JSDF personnel participated in UN PKO in Mozambique (121 troops), El Salvador (30 electoral observers), Golan Heights (792 transport troops), East Timor (3 civilian police officers), East Timor again in 2002 (690 engineering troops), and once again in East Timor from 2002-04 (2,304 engineering troops) (see Table 1). In total, over four thousand JSDF personnel participated in UN PKO from 1992 to 2005, an impressive total by any estimation and a significant contribution to the UN and the international community.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Record of Japan's International Peace Cooperation and Activities, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/pamph2005-2.pdf> (accessed 28 December 2010).



Table 1. Record of Japan's International Peace Cooperation Activities

**Record of Japan's International Peace Cooperation Activities  
based on the International Peace Cooperation Law**

(As of March 2005)

**UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)**

(total numbers)

United Nations Angola Verification Mission II (UNAVEM II)	Electoral observers	Sep-Oct 1992	3 persons
United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)	Military observers	Sep 1992-Sep 1993	8 persons x 2
	Civilian police	Oct 1992-Jul 1993	75 persons
	Engineering units	Sep 1992-Sep 1993	600 persons x 2
	Electoral observers	May-Jun 1993	41 persons
United Nations Operation In Mozambique (ONUMOZ)	Staff officers	May 1993-Jan 1995	5 persons x 2
	Movement control units	May 1993-Jan 1995	48 persons x 3
	Electoral observers	Oct-Nov 1994	15 persons
United Nations Observer Mission In El Salvador (ONUSAL)	Electoral observers	Mar/Apr 1994	15 persons x 2
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)	Staff officers	Feb 1996-present	2 persons x 9
	Transport units	Feb 1996-present	43 persons x 18
United Nations Mission In East Timor (UNAMET) *	Civilian police	Jul-Sep 1999	3 persons
United Nations Transitional Administration In East Timor (UNTAET)	Engineer group	Mar-May 2002	680 persons
	Headquarters personnel	Feb-May 2002	10 persons
United Nations Mission of Support In East Timor (UNMISSET)	Engineer group	May 2002-Jun 2004	680 persons x 2 +522 persons +405 persons
	Headquarters personnel	May 2002-Jun 2004	10 persons + 7 persons

\*UNAMET:UN Political Mission.

**sub-total: 4633 persons**

**International Humanitarian Relief Operations**

Relief of Rwandan refugees	Refugee relief units	Sep-Dec 1994	283 persons
	Airlifting units	Sep-Dec 1994	118 persons
Relief of East Timorese displaced persons	Airlifting units	Nov 1999-Feb 2000	113 persons
Relief activities of Afghan refugees	Airlifting units	Oct 2001	138 persons
Relief of Iraqi refugees	Airlifting units	Apr 2003	56 persons
Relief of Iraqi victims	Airlifting units	Jul-Aug 2003	104 persons

**sub-total: 812 persons**

**International election monitoring activities**

Bosnia and Herzegovina general and regional elections	Elections supervisors and observers	Sep 1998	30 persons
Bosnia and Herzegovina municipal assembly elections	Polling supervisors	Mar-Apr 2000	11 persons
Timor-Leste constituent assembly elections	Electoral observers	Aug-Sep 2001	19 persons
Kosovo assembly elections	Electoral observers	Nov 2001	6 persons
Timor-Leste presidential election	Electoral observers	Apr 2002	8 persons

**sub-total: 74 persons**

**total:5519 persons**

(excl. liaison and coordination personnel)

But when one looks at the specific forces that participated in each operation and their specialties, the experience the overall JSDF gained from these operations appears very limited. UN operations are not combat operations, and the forces Japan committed to the various efforts were not specifically combat arms military personnel. Engineering and transportation units are key logistical units to any force, but their experience in UN missions does not give the JSDF offensive or defensive combat experience and therefore gives them limited credibility in military conflicts.

Also the number of personnel Japan has contributed to UN PKO is hardly impressive when compared to those of other contributing nations. As of 31 January 2011, Japan was only contributing a total of 268 JSDF personnel to UN PKO operations, and was the 47th-ranked country in personnel contribution. This pales in comparison to other contributing countries like Pakistan (10,672), Bangladesh (10,380), and India (8,680). Even significantly smaller countries are contributing greater forces to these international operations than Japan; these include Jordan (3,969), Burkina Faso (1,037), and Togo (698).<sup>46</sup> This is a one-time snapshot, but it represents the norm for the JSDF over the past five years. The standard number of JSDF participants in UN PKO is between 30 and 39. In each January and July from 2006 to 2010, only once was JSDF participation higher than 39 service members: in July of 2010, when the JSDF had 230 service members participating in UN PKO, in response to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti.<sup>47</sup> The downward participation trend of the JSDF does not lead to greater capabilities of the force, particularly its ground forces. Japan does rank second behind the U.S. in total financial contributions to the UN, but in order to enhance JSDF capability, it needs operational experience.<sup>48</sup> The JSDF has the numbers and the capacity to contribute more and gain much needed experience, but it is choosing not to at this time. Figure 1 further illustrates these points.

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<sup>46</sup> Ranking of Military and Police Contributions to UN Operations, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2011/jan11\\_2.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2011/jan11_2.pdf) (accessed 03 March 2011).

<sup>47</sup> “United Nations Peacekeeping: Troops and Police Contributors Archives 2006-2010, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors\\_archive.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors_archive.shtml).

<sup>48</sup> UN Peacekeeping Background Note, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/backgroundnote.pdf> (accessed 03 March 2011).

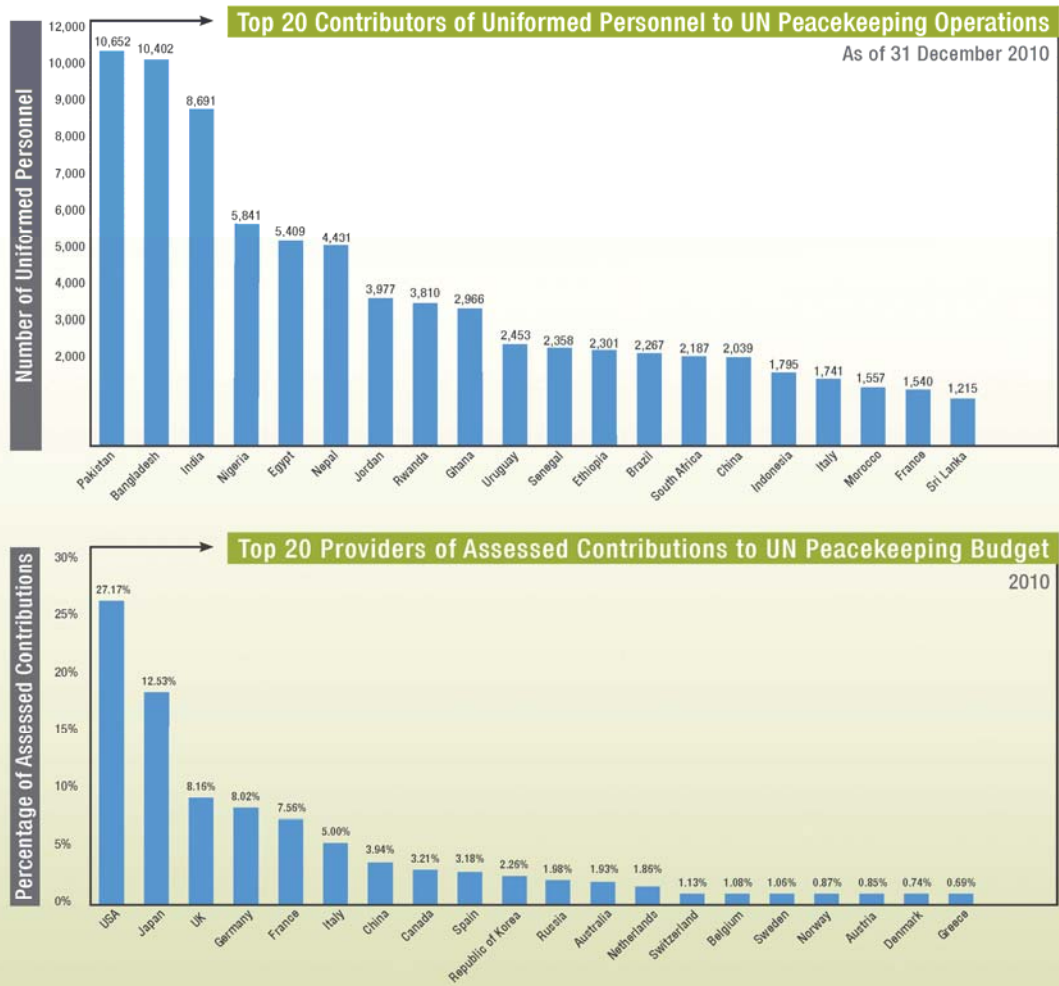


Figure 1. UN contributions to peacekeeping operations

### **3. Other International Operations**

Since September 11, 2001, the JSDF has been involved in a number of international security operations that have increased its exposure globally and advanced the experience and capabilities of its maritime force but also inflated the beliefs of many in the overall capabilities of the JSDF. In December 2001, the MSDF began supporting the NATO-led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan by sending refueling vessels to the Arabian Sea. This mission continued until October 2009, when the newly elected Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) ended the eight-year-old mission. This was the first operation in which any member of the JSDF had supported combat operations anywhere in the world. Jane's Defense Weekly stated, "Canceling the renewed refueling mission was one of the first defense policy decisions made by the DPJ following its victory in the August 2009 general election."<sup>49</sup> The termination of support for the refueling mission is seen by many as a reversion to previous isolationist policies in international affairs, but few other significant changes have been made by the DPJ since October 2009.

In 2003, the Diet passed the Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance to Iraq. This law enabled a 560-personnel force to deploy to Iraq to provide "medical services and civil affairs" support. The majority of these forces would come from the GSDF and deploy to Samawah, Iraq, where they would provide water supply and school reconstruction. Other transportation personnel would come from the ASDF and MSDF in order to transport materials and supplies to Samawah. Although the refueling mission in the Arabian Sea provided support to combat operations in Afghanistan, the reconstruction mission in Samawah "marked an important milestone in the international role and prestige of the JSDF." Even as the JSDF personnel were armed and trained to operate in a combat environment, the law allowing them to participate in the reconstruction effort had extremely stringent rules of engagement, prohibiting the JSDF from firing on any enemy unless their lives "were

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<sup>49</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

being directly threatened.” This mission was originally authorized for two years and then extended for an additional two years. JSDF personnel provided support to Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004 to 2008, when the law expired.<sup>50</sup>

Although both of these operations were significant changes in the participation of the JSDF in the international environment, neither are examples of a normal military fully participating in combat or security operations overseas. In Samawah, the GSDF personnel were even provided security by other coalition forces. As what is supposed to be a fully competent and capable military force, why did the JSDF need to be protected like a civilian aid organization in a combat environment? If the JSDF is not a normal military, what is it and how does this affect the U.S. Japan security alliance? In order to further answer and address these questions, a better understanding of the actual size, structure, and order of battle of the JSDF is necessary.

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<sup>50</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

### **III. THE JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCE: A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The previous chapter outlined the history of the JSDF, an important component to understanding how the JSDF got to where it is today. The next step in understanding the capabilities of the JSDF is enumerating its size, strength, and equipment, but also what areas is the JSDF lacking, especially in comparison to what other normal militaries do have. This chapter will separate the JSDF into its three main branches of service, laying out the force structure of each for further analysis. This section is designed to answer some of the earlier questions presented about what constitutes a capable military. Can and how does the JSDF defend the homeland of Japan against external threat? Within its ability to protect the homeland, does it have the geographical force layout that best enables it to conduct proper and immediate defense against potential threats? If there is a gap in military capability, does the JSDF have external support to alleviate this missing component? The military components of the JSDF must be analyzed individually to get a true understanding of their individual capabilities. The question is not just whether or not the JSDF has a ground, naval, and air force, but what capabilities these individual forces have and whether their orders of battle appropriately allow them to provide the security they are designed to provide. What power projection capabilities do each of the forces have or plan to have in the future? This implies not just offensive military capability, but also transport, logistical, and refueling capacity that allows a military to sustain operations outside its own borders. How up to date are the military's technology, and what plans or intentions does it have to acquire new technologies? And finally, is the military in a position to defend its society in the event of a security crisis? What is its overall readiness, as measured through the JSDF's exercise and operational experience?

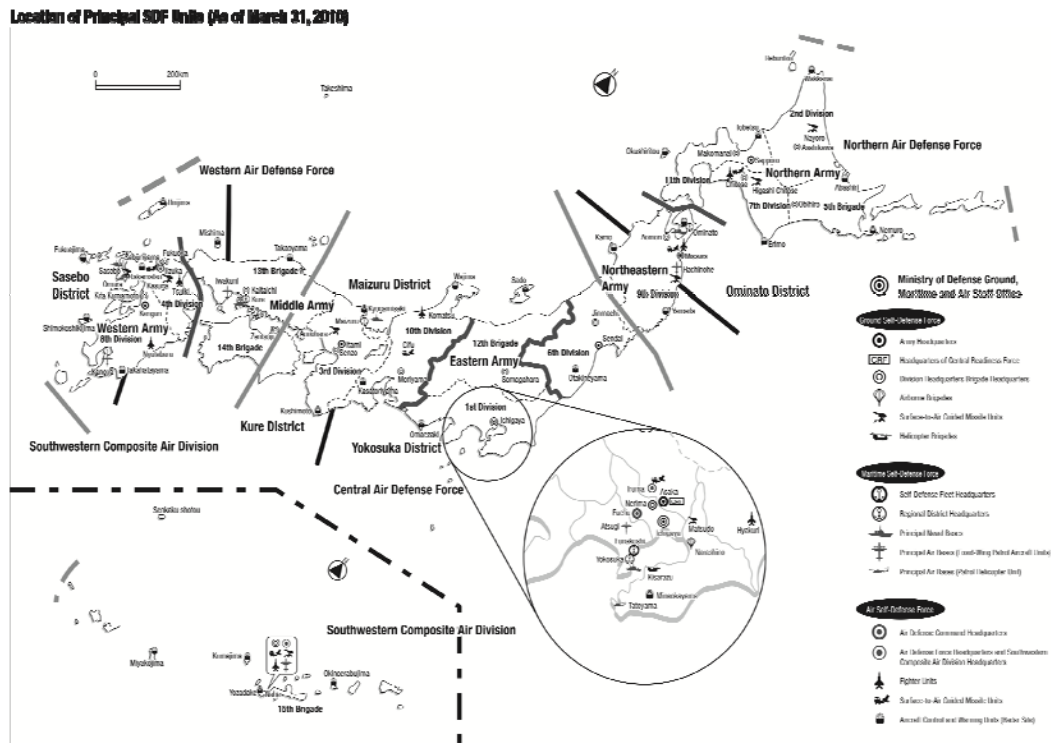


Figure 2. Location of SDF Units as of 31 March 2010

## A. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING CAPABILITY

This chapter will be an evaluation of the overall capabilities of JSDF, based on which a detailed evaluation of each branch of service, as well as Japan's ballistic missile defense program, will be conducted. How each branch of the JSDF is able to accomplish its respective capability criteria will vary. The explicit criteria for each service are as follows:

- 1) The ability to defend the Japanese homeland. This is the core mission of the JSDF and should be the number one priority for each service.
- 2) A geographical layout of the service in a way that enables it to fully accomplish its missions.
- 3) An order of battle sufficient to accomplish its missions, including its personnel, weapons systems, and force structure.

- 4) Adequate ability to project power outside Japan's immediate territory.
- 5) Possession of the latest technology or the means or plans to acquire the technologies necessary to address external threats that exist or will exist in the immediate future.
- 6) Readiness to operate when called upon. This criterion is best measured by the force's exercise and operational experience and plans to enhance that experience in the immediate future.
- 7) Support from an external source, such the U.S., to fill any security gaps that may exist.

The GSDF, ASDF, MSDF, and, separately, the BMD system, will all be evaluated in the above areas. Some areas are more crucial to a force's overall mission and some may not apply, but all areas will be evaluated in one way or another. A rating of high, medium, or low will be given to each branch of the JSDF in the seven different categories. A high rating should be interpreted as the JSDF's having ability that compares favorably to that of any true military in the world. A medium rating is just below the true military level. It indicates either that the JSDF currently has a high level of capability but is losing ground to other international forces or that it does not currently completely have the capability but has plans for improvement in place. A low rating should be interpreted as well below that of a normal military and an area in which the JSDF has difficulty accomplishing its mission without significant support from the U.S.

## **B. THE GROUND SELF-DEFENSE FORCE**

The current size of the GSDF is approximately 151,640 personnel, with an additional 8,470 in reserve.<sup>51</sup> The GSDF is in size comparable to the armies of Austria, Sweden, and Switzerland, and ranks 43rd in the world.<sup>52</sup>

The force is broken down into eleven divisions, ten infantry divisions and one armored division. The GSDF also has a total of sixteen brigades: two composite

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<sup>51</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

<sup>52</sup> James Hackett. "The Military Balance 2010." International Institute for Strategic Studies, London: Routledge, February 2010.



brigades, one airborne brigade, one artillery brigade, two low-level air defense brigades, four training brigades, one heliborne brigade, and five engineer brigades. In addition to the various units, the GSDF has two artillery groups, four low-level air defense groups, and anti-tank helicopter squadrons. A typical GSDF division consists of 6,000 to 9,000 troops, while a typical GSDF brigade consists of approximately 3,000 to 4,000 troops. In comparison, a United States Army division includes between 10,000 and 15,000 soldiers, while a brigade includes between 3,000 and 5,000 soldiers.<sup>53</sup>

The force layout of the GSDF is of regional Armies, consisting of between two and four divisions per Army, in five different regional commands throughout Japan. The largest Army is the Northern Army located in Hokkaido, the northernmost main Japanese island. Hokkaido is able to maintain the presence of the largest army because of limited population and expensive terrain not found in the densely populated areas remainder of the country. The Northern Army is a relic of the Cold War, and its current structure and layout does not reinforce the GSDF's ability to most efficiently defend the homeland. During the Cold War, Japan's greatest fears were focused on the Soviet Union, and therefore Japan's major defenses were placed in the most likely location of an offensive course of action from the Soviets. With the Cold War over and the Soviet Union non-existent, the greatest threats to Japan are no longer to the north, but to the west and southwest or from terrorist threats that could come from any location. With Japan's most likely threats coming from North Korea, China or a potential clash between powers in the area of Taiwan, the GSDF would began moving its forces south to Honshu, Kyushu or even to Okinawa. The Ministry of Defense appears to understand this change in threat and how changing its regional layout would counter its emerging threats to the west. In the most recent National Defense Program Guidelines, it states, "While reducing Cold War-style equipment and organizations, priority functions, including those in Japan's southwestern region, will be enhanced."<sup>54</sup> Recognition is the first step toward making the appropriate security adjustments; only time will tell if Japan follows through on this security alteration. The 2nd and 7th Divisions of the GSDF make up the Northern Army,

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<sup>53</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Japan's National Defense Program Guidelines, 17 December 2010, 5.

along with five additional support Brigades. The other Armies within the GSDF include the North Eastern Army, headquartered in Sendai, which includes the 6th and 9th Divisions, and three additional Brigades; the Eastern Army, headquartered in Nerima (suburban Tokyo), where the 1st Division and four Brigades are located; the Middle Army, composed of the 3rd and 10th Divisions and four Brigades and headquartered in Itami, outside of Osaka; and the Western Army, headquartered in Kengun in Kumamoto Prefecture and consisting of the 4th and 8th Divisions and four additional Brigades.<sup>55</sup> There are various smaller units and MOD facilities scattered throughout Japan. The GSDF is responsible for the defense of the Japanese homeland in case of an aggressive external attack. The configuration of the regional force made sense during the Cold War, with its focus on the north and defense of the capital city. With new threats emerging, mainly from North Korea and potentially China to the west, it is curious that no major GSDF force resides on the Western side of the Japanese homeland.

In the post-September 11, 2001, environment, Japan created the Central Readiness Force (CRF) to act as a military first responder in times of crisis. “The Central Readiness Force Regiment conducts both domestic mission[s], as reinforcement for Regional Armies, and Overseas mission[s], as advance troop[s]. [The] International Peace Cooperation Activities Training Unit continuously provides education for international peace cooperation activities.”<sup>56</sup> The 4,200 personnel unit was created in March 2007 as a part of the overall GSDF, but the unit reports directly to the Minister of Defense because of its unique skill sets and responsibilities. Although the unit was developed in response to the international terrorism threat and the need for more timely response in times of crisis, the unit has seen action only in UN missions in Nepal, Sudan, and the Golan Heights. The unit is currently headquartered at the Asaka Garrison in Tokyo’s Nerima Ward, but is scheduled to move to US Army Camp Zama in Japan in 2012 in order to promote stronger ties between the US and Japan.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, Central Readiness Force Organization, <http://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/crf/pa/Englishv/crfororganization/crforindex.html> (accessed 31 January 2011).

<sup>57</sup> Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

The CRF is training to be the elite ground fighting force in the JSDF, but it is still in its very early developmental stages. Its primary missions to this point have been in UN peacekeeping operations, not crisis responses or hostile special operations. Without a significant event occurring within Japan to test the capabilities of the CRF, the unit must plan and execute training opportunities alongside elite ground force units within the U.S. military (for example, its special-operations-capable units). Only then will the GSDF have an elite rapid reaction unit with elite capabilities, not an additional ground force with an elite title. As the capabilities of the CRF are enhanced, the overall readiness of the GSDF will be greatly improved from its current state.

Although the CRF was one of the more significant GSDF changes that came out of the 2005 National Defense Program Guidelines, there were other force structure changes that have enormous impact on both the current capability of the GSDF and the long-term capabilities of the force. In the 2005 NDPG, Japan lays out the future role it believes the JSDF should play in the international community in order to maintain stability and security in the region and the world. The stance of the GOJ is that an aggressive, offensive, active military in Japan would create instability in Asia, but that with increased global threats, Japan can no longer isolate itself from international security affairs. It must change its force in a way that lets it commit more fully to international peacekeeping and disaster relief efforts.

The 2005–2009 Mid-Term Defense Program, approved by the Japanese Security Council and the Cabinet on 10 December 2004, outlines changes that must be made to the GSDF in order to achieve this new role outlined in the NDPG. Along with establishing the CRF, the GSDF was to “transform five Divisions, one Brigade and two Combined Brigades, among which a Division and two Combined Brigades are converted into three Brigades, in order to improve readiness and mobility, while reducing the number of tanks and artillery.”<sup>58</sup> The GSDF made many of the structural changes outlined in 2004, while at the same time an overall reduction of the conventional forces has been made. The current layout of forces with nine division and six brigades is what the 2005-2009 Mid-

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<sup>58</sup> Mid-Term Defense Program (FY 2005-2009), Reference 9, Defense of Japan 2008.

Term Defense Program had called for.<sup>59</sup> The reduction in Cold War defense capabilities such as tanks and artillery has been a contentious debate within the MOD, as procurement of these weapons is a major financial boom for companies like Mitsubishi, but the MOD has committed to the reduction of these weapons systems for more modern and mobile platforms. The planned reduction of the main battle tank and artillery platforms in the GSDF is from its current level of 900 to 600.<sup>60</sup> While reducing the number of Cold War-era heavy equipment like tanks and artillery, the GSDF has been “equipment that allows great agility and mobility, including helicopters (combat, transport, and multi-purpose) and light armored vehicles.”<sup>61</sup> The acquisition of more mobile equipment and the reduction in heavier equipment is an example of Japan’s altered security philosophy in the post-Cold War age: it is beginning to utilize the appropriate technology to enhance its ground forces.

Training and operational experience are the areas in which the GSDF is lacking most. Although the official training pipeline toward becoming a member or officer in the JSDF is standardized in ways similar to those of most other modern militaries, the follow-on training and operation time GSDF units receive is extremely limited. The GSDF has an enlisted basic training course, specialized enlisted schools, Non-Commissioned Officer candidate courses, Officer candidate courses, the National Defense Academy, and specialized flight, medical, and technical training. The official training and education of SDF personnel is modeled on the U.S. military training and education command system. Where the GSDF differs from most modern militaries is in the follow-on training exercises and subsequent operations GSDF personnel are able to experience. The MOD is, at best, apprehensive about having GSDF personnel participate in international training exercises that involve any form of combat exercise. GSDF personnel have not participated in the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) Cobra Gold exercise as more than military observers. Cobra Gold is a joint military exercise that

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<sup>59</sup> Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

<sup>61</sup> Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi. *Global Security Watch: Japan*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010, 53.

focuses on enhancing military-to-military relationships between the US and many of its Asian allies, including Thailand, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, and Indonesia. JSDF forces from the MSDF participate in the exercise, while GSDF personnel only participate as observers. It is a unique, large-scale military training exercise that includes a multinational amphibious assault, combined arms live-fire training, and other civil and humanitarian assistance exercises, in which the GSDF has limited experience as participants.<sup>62</sup>

Although the GSDF is sending personnel to receive specialized training with the US military, their numbers are extremely insignificant and can only have a limited impact on the overall capability of the GSDF. After September 11th, 2001, the GSDF began participating in more training opportunities with the US military. For example, in 2002, twenty GSDF personnel completed a US support operations course. From 2001-04, the GSDF has had four officers graduate from the US Army Special Forces Officer Qualification Course. This is an outstanding accomplishment, but the number “four” will do little to impact the overall GSDF. Also in 2002, the US and GSDF conducted their first company level joint Military Operations in Urban Terrain exercise in Hawaii. Although this training is exactly what the GSDF needs to enhance its tactical capabilities, the fact that until this time in 2002 the GSDF did not have an urban training facility of its own is another example of the often-misunderstood capabilities of the force. The JSDF has since built an urban training facility in Kyushu, but one facility for a force of over 150,000 personnel spread across a country the size of Japan is neglectful. In comparison, almost every ground component military installation in the U.S. has an urban training facility, while major installations have multiple facilities.<sup>63</sup>

The GSDF is making numerous changes and enhancements to its force structure and personnel to increase the forces overall capability, but the information above highlights some of the areas in which the GSDF is still lacking and needs time to improve.

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<sup>62</sup> U.S. Army Pacific, Cobra Gold 2010, <http://www.usarpac.army.mil/cg10/index.asp> (accessed 04 February 2011).

<sup>63</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Army, 12 November 2010.

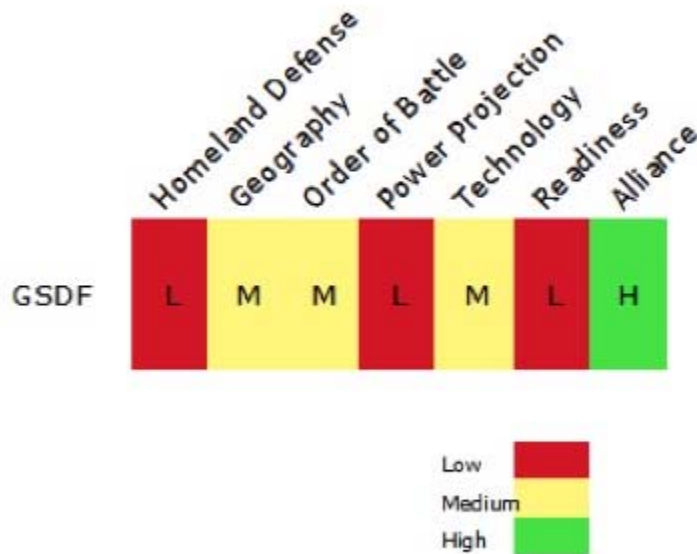


Figure 3. GSDF Capability Chart

### C. AIR SELF-DEFENSE FORCE

The size and strength of the ASDF gives some indication of the overall capability of the Japanese Air Force but does not tell the entire story. It is important to understand what the ASDF can currently do, what it intends to be able to do in the future, and what it cannot or does not have a desire to do in order to fully understand its capabilities and how it compares to other forces in the international community.

The mission of the ASDF is to provide early warning surveillance and rapid reaction in defense of Japanese airspace. The ASDF is currently composed of approximately 47,128 personnel, eight aircraft warning groups, twenty warning squadrons, one airborne warning squadron, twelve fighter squadrons, one air reconnaissance squadron, three air transport squadrons, one air refueling/transport

squadron, and six surface-to-air guided missile (SAM) groups. In total, there are approximately 350 aircraft in the ASDF, with approximately 260 fighter aircraft.<sup>64</sup>

The ASDF is structured in a regional defensive layout much like the GSDF's, with four regional forces protecting the homeland from outside attack. The three forces residing within mainland Japan are the Northern, Central, and Western Air Defense commands. The fourth command is responsible for the protection of Okinawa and is known as the South-Western Composite Air Division. Each force contains elements of reconnaissance, transport, SAM, and interceptor assets.<sup>65</sup> The regional layout of the ASDF allows it to rapidly defend against outside aggression on the Japanese homeland. The ASDF is accomplishing this area of its mission, but its ability to provide for future missions is what is causing the changes currently being made to the overall force.

The current capabilities of the ASDF that give the overall force credibility internationally focus on air-to-air and surface-to-air defenses over the Japanese homeland. As Lind wrote in 2004, the ASDF is “arguably the fourth most powerful air force, after the United States, Great Britain, and France...measured by number of modern fighter aircraft, by airborne early warning assets, and by pilot training (one measure of pilot skill).”<sup>66</sup> Andrew Oros and Yuki Tatsumi would now argue that the air forces of China and Russia stand in front of the ASDF, but that still puts the Japanese force at an elite status in the international security environment.<sup>67</sup> These measures focus specifically on the defense of the homeland. The ASDF has a fighter force with superior training in operations conducted within this defined area. The surface-to-air capability the ASDF holds is credited to its ties with the US military. The U.S.-developed Patriot surface-to-air guided missile system gives Japan this capability. The ASDF is currently integrating the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 System, replacing the second-generation PAC-

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<sup>64</sup> Japan Defense White Papers.  
[http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2010/21Part2\\_Chapter2\\_Sec2.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2010/21Part2_Chapter2_Sec2.pdf). (accessed 5 February 2011).

<sup>65</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Air Force, 27 August 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Jennifer M. Lind, "Pacifism or Passing the Buck? Testing the Theories of Japanese Security Policy." *International Security* (The MIT Press) 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004): 97–98.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch: Japan*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010, 50.

2 system originally provided by the U.S. military. The necessity of these weapons defense systems is rooted in the potential North Korea offensive missile system, most noticeably its Nodong (Rodong) Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs).<sup>68</sup>

The strengths of the ASDF reside in its air-to-air and surface-to-air capabilities, but the force's limitations are glaring and create a gap that the MOD is currently working to solve. Where the ASDF has limited capability is in power projection outside the immediate surrounding areas of Japan. The ASDF is attempting to address three main gaps in its air defense program: transport capability, refueling, and ballistic missile defense (BMD).<sup>69</sup> In order to address the first two areas of weakness, the ASDF is acquiring the Boeing KC-767 tanker aircraft, which will be used not only as a transport aircraft, but also for its in-flight refueling capability. This aircraft will give the ASDF an expanded power projection capability it has not had since the end of World War II. The acquisition of the KC-767 has been an extremely slow process: Japan first agreed to add the aircraft to its arsenal in 2001, but the final tanker of the four originally ordered arrived 8 January 2010. It is the intention of the ASDF to acquire four additional tankers to increase its international operation capability, officially for humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations.<sup>70</sup>

The acquisition of the KC-767 will increase ASDF transportation capability, but the increase will be limited. The ASDF is still developing its medium-range cargo aircraft (C-X), which will address some of the transport gaps that currently exist. The ASDF is attempting to improve areas in its air defense where it is lacking, but as the previous examples show, this takes not only desire, but also time. And once the capability has been acquired, it takes even longer to become expert or even proficient at it.

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<sup>68</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Air Force, 27 August 2010.

<sup>69</sup> Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch: Japan*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010, 50.

<sup>70</sup> Jane's All the World's Aircraft, Jane's Defense Weekly, Boeing 767 Military Versions, 5 January 2011.



Another major area of concern for the ASDF is that it does not currently have a long-term solution as to what its future fighter aircraft will be. It was the intention of the Japanese to procure the F-22 from the US, but the deal for the F-22 is no longer on the table because of budget restrictions in the US. The ASDF is currently using F-2s, F-15s, and F-4s, but these aircraft are older generations that need to be replaced. The F-22 was the right aircraft for the future desires of the ASDF, but without that option, no solution has yet been determined.<sup>71</sup> Maintenance and enhancement to these aircrafts are short-term solutions to the fighter fleet problem, but a long-term solution is needed, and soon.



Figure 4. ASDF Capabilities Chart

<sup>71</sup> Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi. *Global Security Watch: Japan*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010, 50.

#### **D. MARITIME SELF-DEFENSE FORCE**

The MSDF is the most capable and experienced branch of the JSDF. The force has been gaining prestige in the international security environment for the last two decades through consistent operational tours of duty in various areas of the sea. Why is the MSDF the most capable of the three major branches of the JSDF? There are several reasons that explain how advanced the MSDF has become and continues to be. First and most obvious is the geographic location of Japan and the series of islands that combine make up the nation. In order to actively defend its homeland and ensure the protection of the resources entering Japan from the seas, a capable Navy has always been a necessity for Japan. Less obvious or known is the role the MSDF provided in security operations during the Cold War against the Soviet Union. The MSDF was an effective deterrent against the Soviet submarine fleet in East Asia during the latter years of the Cold War. An additional reason for the advanced capabilities of the MSDF has everything to do with the factors that have led to diminished the capabilities for the GSDF and ASDF: training and operational experience. The MSDF has been conducting various surveillance, minesweeping, and anti-submarine warfare activities for the past four decades, while the experience of the other forces has been limited mainly to the last fifteen years at most.

The MSDF is the smallest branch of the JSDF, but its number of personnel does not reflect its capability compared to the other forces. There are currently approximately 45,500 sailors in the MSDF. This number includes both naval aviation and the naval reserve (the reserves are insignificant, totaling approximately 1,100 in 2009). The MSDF is comprised of four escort flotillas. Each flotilla has up to six destroyers or frigates, an amphibious ship, anti-mine ships, patrol crafts, a destroyer flagship, two air defense destroyers, and five anti-submarine warfare escorts.<sup>72</sup> The MSDF overall has approximately 148 vessels, including 52 destroyers, 16 submarines, and 30 minesweepers. It also contains 195 aircraft, of which 185 are used for surveillance purposes and include P-3Cs, UH-60Js, and SH-50Js.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Air Force, 22 October 2010.

<sup>73</sup> Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi, *Global Security Watch: Japan*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010, 54.

Like the GSDF and ASDF, the MSDF is divided into five regional commands with separate areas of operation for each unit. The JMSDF is headquartered in Yokosuka, as are the following major commands under the flag of the Yokosuka District Fleet: 1st Escort Flotilla, the 2nd Submarine Flotilla, the Mine Warfare Force, Fleet Research Development Command, Oceanographic Command, and the Fleet Intelligence Command. This command's area of responsibility is the northeastern to eastern part of Japan on the Pacific Ocean side. The Sasebo District Fleet is home to the 2nd Escort Flotilla with the southern part of Japan as its area of responsibility. The Ominato District is responsible for the northern tip of mainland Japan and the Hokkaido island area. The Maizuru District is responsible for the northeastern to central-west part of Japan facing the Sea of Japan; this district contains the 3rd Escort Flotilla. The fifth regional command is the Kure District, which is responsible for the southeastern area of Japan and contains the 4th Escort Flotilla.<sup>74</sup>

The capabilities of the MSDF are directly related to the potential threats Japan may encounter in the immediate future, but this does not explain exactly why the MSDF has its particular current capabilities. The MSDF developed a highly sophisticated reconnaissance, surveillance, and anti-submarine warfare capability during the Cold War because one of the primary threats facing Japan was Soviet submarines. As an island nation with limited resources, Japan is convinced its greatest threats will come via the sea and that protection of its sea-lanes and lines of communication are vital to Japan's national interest. Japan's ability to deter Soviet submarines during the Cold War has translated into the post-Cold War environment.

Japan has proven its ability to protect the sea environment on two separate occasions in recent years. In 1999, an MSDF P-3C patrol aircraft spotted a North Korean spy vessel during a routine surveillance and patrol operation off the Noto Peninsula. The Japanese Coast Guard tracked the vessel until MSDF destroyers were ordered to relieve them. The MSDF was ordered to stop the vessel and even fired warning shots toward the

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<sup>74</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Air Force, 22 October 2010 and Andrew L. Oros and Yuki Tatsumi. *Global Security Watch: Japan*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010, 55.

fleeing vessel. The vessel was forced out of Japanese territorial waters and the MSDF stood down. This operation was the first of its kind for the MSDF and showed its capability to survey, track, and deter dangerous vessels in Japanese areas of influence. The second incident occurred in 2005, when another P-3C patrol aircraft spotted an unidentified submarine in Japanese territorial waters near Sakishima. The MSDF was once again called upon to conduct maritime security operations on the submarine until it was no longer in Japanese territorial waters. Once the submarine was out of the MSDF's area of interest, the MSDF destroyers were ordered to stand down. The unidentified vessel was later reported to be a Chinese nuclear submarine.<sup>75</sup> These two incidents are recent examples of the capability of the MSDF to conduct maritime security operations to protect areas of interest for Japan. The MSDF has the ability, through its surveillance and reconnaissance patrols, to identify, track, and deter unwanted vessels threatening Japanese territorial waters or areas of interest.

The previously noted operations of the MSDF represent the core mission of the force as directed by the government of Japan. These identify, track, and deter operations are not the only areas of expertise in which the MSDF has proven itself in recent years. I argue that these other niche areas in which the MSDF has gained influence are the areas the U.S. wants the MSDF to pursue. Just as the U.S. depended on the MSDF's anti-submarine capability during the Cold War when the U.S. was reducing its naval presence in East Asia, the U.S. now calls on the MSDF to carry the international load in humanitarian aid/disaster relief operations, as well as in other operations in the Global War Against Terrorism. The MSDF's taking on these additional roles frees the U.S. Navy to conduct direct combat operations and other more aggressive operations (for example, counter-piracy operations) around the globe. The MSDF has also been involved in support operations to the US in the Global War Against Terrorism, as well as disaster relief operations. MSDF refueling ships dispatched to the Indian Ocean for eight years between 2001 and 2009 in support of the U.S. and other nations' naval vessels conducting maritime security interdiction operations in the Indian Ocean. These

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<sup>75</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, Maritime Self-Defense Force, Precautionary Surveillance, <http://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/formal/english/surveillance/index.html> (accessed 12 February 2011).

operations showed remarkable success with the interdiction of ships carrying large quantities of narcotics, small arms, and anti-tank rockets.<sup>76</sup> The MSDF was also requested by the Thai government to support disaster relief operations in 2004 after a tsunami hit Sumatra in Indonesia. In all, three Destroyers, two Supply ships, and a Transport ship were deployed to Sumatra for Humanitarian Aid/Disaster Relief support. The MSDF conducted search and rescue operations, recovering fifty-seven bodies and returning them to Thai authorities. The MSDF also conducted supply and transport operations as necessary in the affected areas.<sup>77</sup>

The U.S. desires active participation from the JSDF in these various areas of international operations for three reasons. 1) Participation by other nations such as Japan in security operations puts an international face rather than an American face on missions. The American military is not as widely accepted in all areas of the world as international coalitions. 2) The financial expense of the operations is shared by the international community and not exclusively paid for by the American taxpayer. 3) When U.S. allies gain experience in international operations and can eventually take the lead, the American military is freed to operate in other areas where its specific skills may be required. The MSDF has proven its capabilities in maritime security, defense of Japan's territorial waters, humanitarian aid/disaster relief, and counterterrorism operations during the past two decades. Throughout this time the stature of the MSDF has continued to grow; this is exactly what the U.S. wants to see from the JSDF.

In order to protect Japan in the territorial waters surrounding the island nation, according to Japan's 2010 Defense White Papers, the MSDF is focusing its future efforts on three specific operational areas. The MSDF is first changing the posture of its eight destroyer divisions to increase security around Japan at all times. The five regional districts will alter the deployment rotations of their destroyers, so that one unit from each region is deployed at all times. This change will ensure that all five regions of Japan will be protected from the sea at all times via capabilities provided by a deployed destroyer

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<sup>76</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, Maritime Self-Defense Force, Activities in Response to International Terrorism, <http://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/formal/english/activities/index.html> (accessed 12 February 2011)

<sup>77</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, Maritime Self-Defense Force, International Disaster Relief Operations, <http://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/formal/english/relief/index.html> (accessed 12 February 2011)

unit. This change is one that recognizes the dangerous neighborhood in which Japan resides and that potential threats from its enemies and terrorist actors could come from any location and at any time.

The second operational area change the MSDF will employ is to re-focus its submarine units. The MSDF will focus the deployments of its submarines to the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan to conduct surveillance and information gathering missions. This change recognizes the potential threat coming from North Korea, but also focuses on the military challenges posed by China, specifically in the East China Sea and around Taiwan. Japan's Defense White Papers do not explicitly state what threat these changes are meant to mitigate, but it is obvious Japan is interested in China's activities around Japan and is altering its defense posture as a first step.

The third focus of the MSDF is as much a change in priority as it is a necessary change because of budget constraints. The MSDF is reducing fixed-wing patrol aircraft units and patrol helicopter units from eight each to four each. This change has been introduced to allow "improvement in efficiency," but this is bureaucratic code for "do more with less." The MSDF is reducing the number of patrol aircrafts from approximately 170 to 150. Japan cannot spend freely on defense, especially given its unofficial 1% cap on defense spending and its costly BMD system. The reduction in patrol aircrafts will be felt, but unit consolidation and utilization of the new P-3C aircraft should ease the burden of these cuts.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Japan's Defense White Papers 2010, Part II The Basics of Japan's Defense Policy and Build-up of Defense Capability, 159.

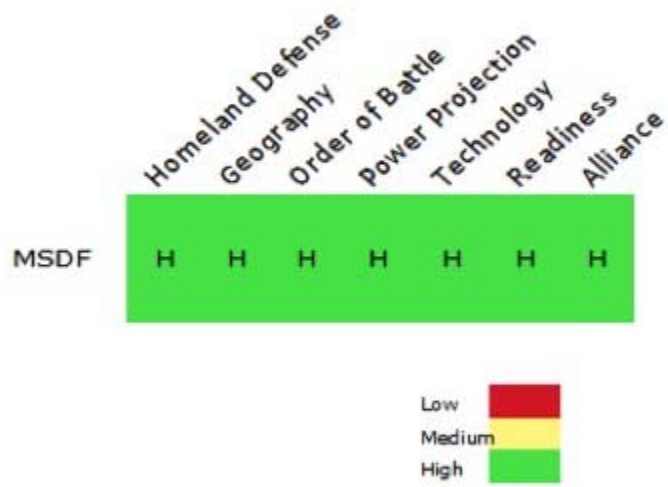


Figure 5. MSDF Capabilities Chart

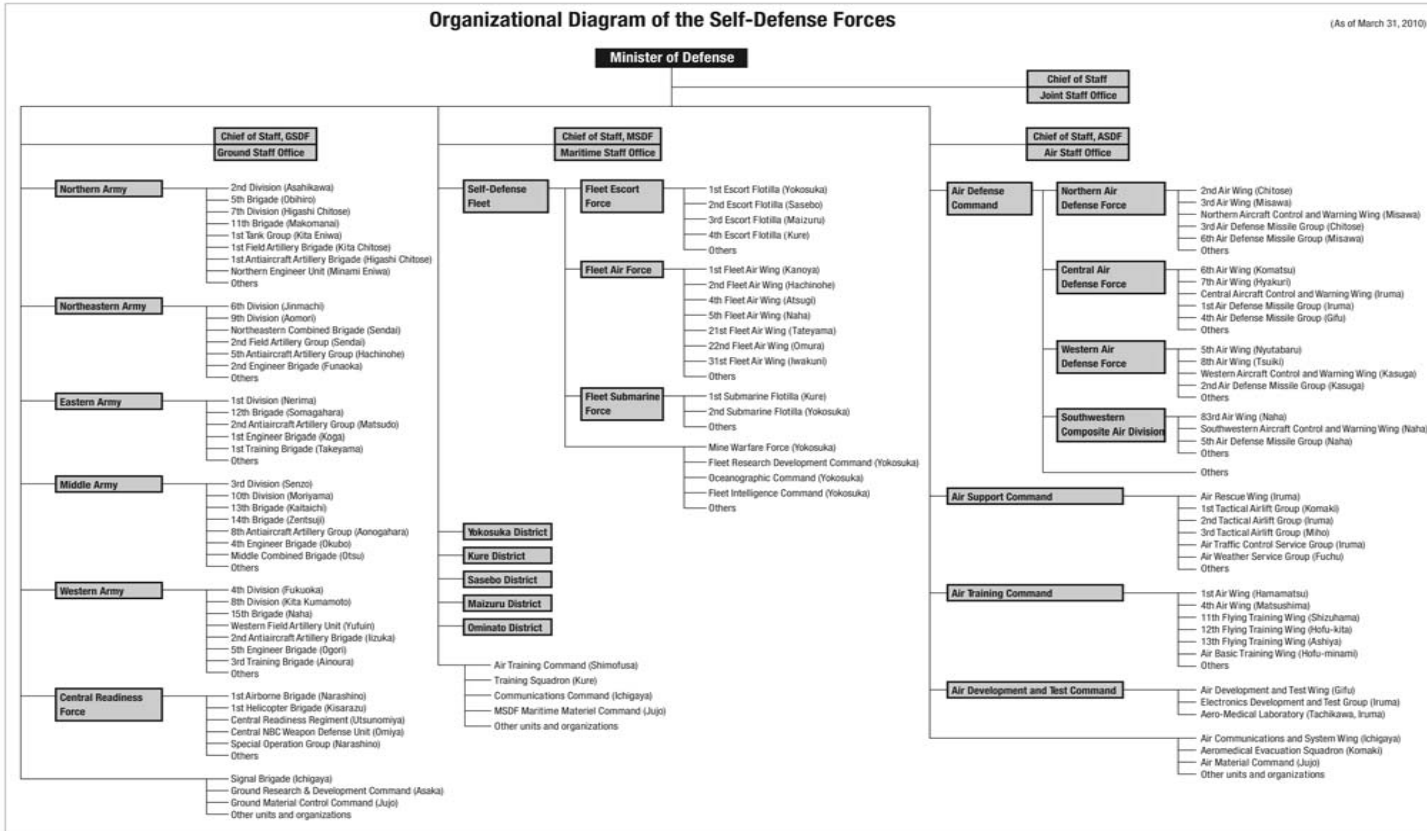


Figure 6. JSDF Organizational Diagram



## **E. BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE**

Ballistic missile defense (BMD) is treated separately here because it is the most enlightening aspect of Japan's national security goals and intentions. Japan has made BMD one of its major priorities over the past decade, and it will continue as such for the foreseeable future, despite significant obstacles the Ministry of Defense had to overcome in order to make BMD possible.

Arguments for the necessity of a BMD system in Japan developed in the mid- to late 1990s in response to the growing ballistic missile threat from North Korea. In 1998, North Korea conducted a missile launch test that invaded Japanese airspace. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. and Japan began the U.S.-Japan Cooperative Research Project to research a joint BMD program to counter this emerging threat.<sup>79</sup> How Japan was able to engage in this program and get away with it politically tells us a great deal about what Japan is willing and capable of doing when it deems it absolutely necessary. But it also explains how Japan must accomplish its defense goals and what it means for the overall capabilities of the JSDF. When Japan increased its spending on BMD, it refused to increase its overall defense budget past the 1% threshold. Other areas of the JSDF would be forced to cutback in order to fund this necessary technology. If when Japan is willing to change its defense posture, it has been unwilling to increase its spending overall.

Originally, in 1998, Japan only agreed to research the joint BMD program with the U.S. Only when the U.S. announced in 2002 that it was moving forward with the development of the BMD program did it force Japan decide whether to stay on board. The leadership in Japan, including Japan Defense Agency (the precursor to the MOD) Director General Ishiba Shigeru and Prime Minister Koizumi, felt a BMD system was absolutely necessary to defend Japan against a ballistic missile strike or to deter North Korea from attacking in the first place. Although this type of executive decision on defense issues is unusual in Japan, it shows how Japan will develop military capabilities it is compelled to by external threats (as well as by encouragement from the U.S.). The next issue for Japan was figuring out how to pay for a project that would cost

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<sup>79</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense Ballistic Missile Defense Program, [https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d\\_act/bmd/bmd.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/bmd/bmd.pdf) (accessed 14 February 2011).

approximately \$9 billion over its first five years. As discussed in the next section, Japan's defense budget is capped at 1% of GDP on an annual basis, and a costly project like this would either take Japan over that cap or require cuts in other areas. Because of the political sensitivity of the 1% cap, Prime Minister Koizumi chose cuts in defense spending on other weapons systems, including tanks, ships, and aircraft.<sup>80</sup> This aspect of the BMD issue illuminates how Japan is willing to cut other capabilities in its conventional force when necessary to keep defense spending below 1% of GDP. This could certainly be a vulnerability in the future for the JSDF. Every country has spending restraints, but the political apprehension to surpassing the 1% cap has been shown to be a powerful force in domestic politics that impacts the JSDF and its future capabilities. The joint U.S.-Japan BMD program is developing into an elite strategic capability for the JSDF, but the cost to other JSDF capabilities is significant.

Another enlightening aspect of the BMD program is its perception as a potentially offensive weapons system. With Japan renouncing the right to sustain means of war potential—and with offensive weapons traditionally categorized as such—the government of Japan has made every effort to emphasize the defensive nature of the BMD system:

[The] BMD system is the only purely defensive measure, without alternatives, to protect life and property of the citizens of Japan against ballistic missile attacks, and meets the principle of exclusively defense-oriented national defense policy. Therefore, it is considered that this presents no threat to neighboring countries, and does not affect [...] regional stability.<sup>81</sup>

This not only highlights the need for the leaders of Japan to maintain this defensive posture for political reasons, but also shows their willingness to shape their message to be more politically palatable if it is in the national security interest of Japan.

Joint capability is a new area of interoperability between the U.S. and Japan. This system strengthens the alliance between the two countries and supports a long-term

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<sup>80</sup> Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (2007), 104–105.

<sup>81</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense Ballistic Missile Defense Program, [https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d\\_act/bmd/bmd.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/bmd/bmd.pdf) (accessed 14 February 2011).

presence for the U.S. military, in some capacity, in Japan. In addition to increasing interoperability, the cuts in other more conventional capabilities to make the system possible in Japan increases the dependence Japan has on the U.S. to provide the support the alliance has always guaranteed. BMD is a significant military capability, but it also provides enormous insight into the future capabilities of the JSDF and the relationship Japan will maintain with the U.S.

The BMD system is a complicated program that has several different capabilities rolled into one. The first system is the U.S. developed Standard Missile-3 (SM-3), which is equipped on Aegis destroyers in Japan. The second system is the Patriot PAC-3 Missile, which is a surface-to-air system developed used by both the U.S. and Japan. The BMD system also includes early warning radar and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) capabilities, as well as a joint ballistic missile command and control where ground station and satellite data and information are shared.<sup>82</sup>

The SM-3 system was first deployed on the Aegis Destroyer Kongo in December 2007. In addition to adding the missile capabilities to the ship, the radar, software, and launcher equipment were modified to equip the SM-3. The utility of this weapons system is that two or three SM-3 equipped Aegis Destroyers can protect the entire territory of Japan at one time. The SM-3 has been tested four times, once each of the previous four years, and it has successfully intercepted its intended target three of four times. These tests have been conducted on four different Aegis Destroyers, with the JDS Chokai the only ship failing to intercept its target. The four destroyers are stationed at three locations: two are in Sasebo, one is in Maizuru, and another is in Yokosuka.<sup>83</sup>

The Patriot system was originally developed as a surface-to-air missile defense system and was introduced in Japan in 1989. The PAC-3 missile is the third generation of this system, and it was developed to intercept short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM) and medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM). The PAC-3 is a mobile system and can

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<sup>82</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – China and Northeast Asia, Japan, Air Force, 22 October 2010.

<sup>83</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense Ballistic Missile Defense Program, [https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d\\_act/bmd/bmd.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/bmd/bmd.pdf) (accessed 14 February 2011).

protect tens of kilometers at a time. The PAC-3 was tested once in 2008 and again in 2009, and it successfully intercepted its target on both occasions. In March 2007, the first PAC-3 system was deployed in Iruma, Japan. By April of 2010 two other units were deployed, one in Gifu and one in Kasuga. A training school has also been established in Hamamatsu.<sup>84</sup>

Moving forward, Japan and the U.S. will continue to become more integrated strategically, operationally, and legally within the BMD system. The two countries are currently researching improvements to the system, developing advanced SM-3 and PAC-3 missiles, enhancing their radar and detection systems, and improving command and control of the overall system. Command and control of the system from the Japanese perspective has been a controversial issue, but also one that shows Japan's willingness to do what is necessary to adapt to potential threats. Japan proscribes strict civilian control of the system, but the time sensitivity required to counter a missile attack makes waiting for the Prime Minister to decide to use the BMD system unrealistic. Japan, recognizing this flaw in the system, has been able to push authority down within the JSDF, though still under strict civilian control and supervision. Once again, Japan has proven its ability to work within and around its pacifist constitution and society in order to do what it must to protect its people and work within the international system as it must to attain security.

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<sup>84</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense Ballistic Missile Defense Program, [https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d\\_act/bmd/bmd.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/bmd/bmd.pdf) (accessed 14 February 2011).

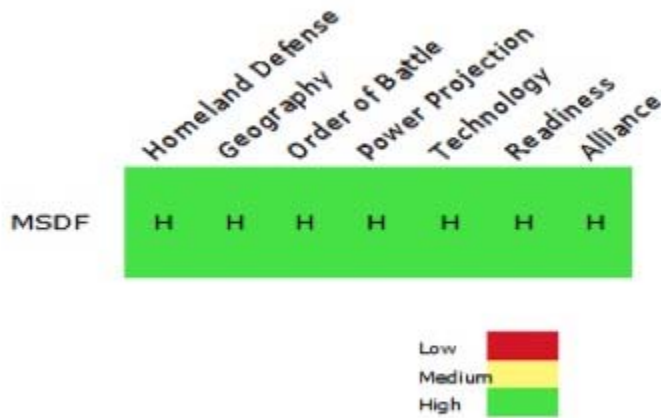


Figure 7. BMD Capabilities Chart

## F. DEFENSE BUDGET

Japan's large (in terms of total dollars) defense budget is often cited as one factor that makes the JSDF an extremely capable military. The ironic aspect of defense spending in Japan is that the *percentage* of spending is also used to express Japan's limited willingness to normalize their military. As with everything, the truth on defense spending is in the details. Japan's defense budget ranks 148th in the world as a percentage of GDP.<sup>85</sup> This only tells part of the story; Japan's defense budget is also the sixth largest in the world.<sup>86</sup> Japan spent \$51 billion on defense in 2009, placing it behind

<sup>85</sup> CIA World Factbook, Country Comparison, Military Expenditures, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2034rank.html> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>86</sup> SIPRI, The 15 Countries with the Highest Military Expenditures in 2009, <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput> (accessed 13 February 2011).

only the U.S., China, France, Great Britain, and Russia. Its defense budget has been kept at just below 1% of GDP since 1967, when the government placed an unofficial cap on defense spending.<sup>87</sup>

Even if one holds that Japan spends a great deal of money on defense, where the money is going and how effectively it is being used are separate questions. Recent trends in overall defense spending give an indication of what Japan is not willing to do in order to answer to potential threats from North Korea and a rising military power in China: it is not willing to outspend its adversaries or get into an arms race. Japan's FY 2011 defense budget will drop for the ninth consecutive year and is at an eighteen-year low. The 2011 budget is \$242 million less than it was in 2010, a .4% decrease in overall defense spending.<sup>88</sup> This may not seem like a significant reduction, but one must take into account the number of years Japan has continued to reduce its defense spending and the fact that over the last decade the threat from North Korea has increased and military modernization in China has not slowed. Japan is quietly saying it will not keep up with its adversaries on its own and that it still plans to keep its defense budget low even in the face of legitimate security threats.

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<sup>87</sup> Akira Kawasaki. "Japan's Military Spending at a Crossroads." *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2009) 131.

<sup>88</sup> Kosuke Takahashi, "Japan Defence Budget Drops to 18-year Low," *Japan's Defence Weekly*, 05 January 2011.

**The 15 countries with the highest military expenditure in 2009**

Spending figures are in US\$, at current prices and exchange rates.

Rank	Country	Spending (\$ b.)	Change, 2000–2009 (%)	Spending per capita (\$)	Share of GDP, 2008 (%) <sup>a</sup>	World share (%)
1	USA	661	75.8	2 100	4.3	43
2	China	[100]	217	[74.6]	[2.0]	[6.6]
3	France	63.9	7.4	1 026	2.3	4.2
4	UK	58.3	28.1	946	2.5	3.8
5	Russia	[53.3]	105	[378]	[3.5]	[3.5]
<b>Sub-total top 5</b>		<b>937</b>				<b>61</b>
6	Japan	51.0	–1.3	401	0.9	3.3
7	Germany	45.6	–6.7	555	1.3	3.0
8	Saudi Arabia <sup>b</sup>	41.2	66.9	1 603	8.2	2.7
9	India	36.3	67.3	30.4	2.6	2.4
10	Italy	35.8	–13.3	598	1.7	2.3
<b>Sub-total top 10</b>		<b>1 147</b>				<b>75</b>
11	Brazil	26.1	38.7	135	1.5	1.7
12	South Korea	24.1	48.2	499	2.8	1.6
13	Canada	19.2	48.8	568	1.3	1.3
14	Australia	19.0	50.2	892	1.8	1.2
15	Spain	18.3	34.4	408	1.2	1.2
<b>Sub-total top 15</b>		<b>1 254</b>				<b>82</b>
<b>World</b>		<b>1 531</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>100</b>

[ ] = estimated figure; GDP = gross domestic product.

<sup>a</sup> The figures for national military expenditure as a share of GDP are for 2008, the most recent year for which GDP data is available.

<sup>b</sup> The figures for Saudi Arabia include expenditure for public order and safety and might be slight overestimates.

Sources: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, <<http://www.sipri.org/databases/milex/>>; and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *State of World Population 2009: Facing a Changing World—Women, Climate and Population* (UNFPA: New York, 2009), p. 91.

Figure 8. The Top 15 Countries with the Highest Military Expenditures in 2009

How does Japan spend its defense money? Here I examine Japan's defense spending for FY 2010. The JSDF spends the most on its approximately 240,000 personnel, including expenses for salaries, food, and lodging. Food and provision spending was 44.5% of Japan's total defense spending in FY 2010. The next largest portion of spending is on general maintenance of equipment, accounting for 21.8% of the FY 2010 budget. The third largest portion of defense spending is for equipment procurement and research and development, at 19.9% of overall defense spending. The remaining portion, accounting for less than 20%, is spent on base measures, facility

development, research and development, and other minor expenses. Included in this portion is the money spent on basing American forces in Japan, at 9% of the overall defense budget.<sup>89</sup> This is an expense very few countries experience.

When the percentages are examined as absolute amounts, one realizes Japan spends less on equipment procurement and R&D than one might have thought. At 19.9% of their \$51 billion defense budget, this category accounts for approximately \$9.7 billion. This may be a very large sum of money by itself, but in defense weapons and equipment procurement circles, this much money vanishes very quickly. By comparison, the U.S. is projecting it will spend approximately \$203.77 billion on procurement and research and development in FY 2011 (which is a reduction from 2010), or approximately 30% of its defense budget.<sup>90</sup> For example, the Boeing 767 Tanker the ASDF has purchased runs between \$150 million to \$225 billion, and the ASDF had four of them come on line in the past decade, for just under a billion dollars. Furthermore, a ballistic missile defense system, which the JSDF has been developing, is even more costly. It was reported in 2003 that the US would spend approximately \$62 billion on its ballistic missile defense system between 2002 and 2009.<sup>91</sup> If Japan were developing a similar system, that amount would account for its entire weapons and equipment budget during that period. Japan is not developing a BMD system as elaborate as the U.S. is, but this is an example of how expensive defense spending can be.<sup>92</sup>

How Japan divides its defense spending among the three branches of the JSDF can be as misleading as the overall numbers. In FY 2010, the defense budget was divided between the GSDF, ASDF, and MSDF at 37.2%, 23.2%, and 22.5% respectively, with

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<sup>89</sup> Akira Kawasaki. "Japan's Military Spending at a Crossroads." *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2009) 132.

<sup>90</sup> Obama's 2012 Budget Proposal: How \$3.7 Trillion is Spent, *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/newsgraphics/2011/0119-budget/index.html?hp&ref=us> (accessed 24 February 2011).

<sup>91</sup> Center for Defense Information, *Missile Defense Updates: Cost*, <http://www.cdi.org/missile-defense/costs-updates.cfm> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>92</sup> Japan Defense White Papers 2010, [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2010/24Part2\\_Chapter2\\_Sec5.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2010/24Part2_Chapter2_Sec5.pdf) (accessed 10 February 2011).



the remaining 17.1% going to other costs within the Ministry of Defense.<sup>93</sup> One might look at these numbers and assume that since the GSDF receives the most investment, it should be the most capable force. But the assumption that the GSDF receives the highest amount of money is in real terms false, and the notion that they are subsequently the most capable force is even more incorrect. The GSDF is three times the actual size of the ASDF or MSDF, but its budget allocation is only approximately one and a half times that of the other two forces. With 44.5% of defense spending going towards personnel costs and provisions, the ASDF and MSDF are receiving an even greater amount of money per individual self-defense force member than the GSDF. This discrepancy in budget allocation between the different branches can be attributed to the cost of high-technology weapons, equipment, and maintenance. The ASDF and MSDF, with their various aircrafts, vessels, weapons systems, and training requirements, naturally have greater budget needs than the GSDF. The budget allocation information supports this explanation and develops a better understanding of how defense spending can impact the capabilities of an overall force.

A detailed examination of defense budgets can also give explicit indications of the direction a particular military is moving, what its priorities are, and what capabilities are lacking or need improvement. The Japan FY 2010 defense budget is no different. A number of the stated priorities of the FY 2010 budget are “the development of the Type 10 Main Battle Tank, introduction of the 22DDH Destroyers to replace the Shirane class destroyer, improv[ing] the ballistic missile defense system, and improv[ing] the F-2 and F-15 fighter capabilities.”<sup>94</sup> This one sentence from Japan’s defense White Papers on the FY 2010 budget describes four areas of major concern for the MOD and gives indications of the status of the overall force and its capabilities. The GSDF is currently reducing the number of battle tanks in its arsenal. Tanks are often seen as a relic of the Cold War era: a means to deter an invading Soviet force, but not a legitimate need in the post Cold War, post-9/11 security environment. Even with this mentality, Japan is struggling to

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<sup>93</sup> Japan Defense White Papers 2010, [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2010/24Part2\\_Chapter2\\_Sec5.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2010/24Part2_Chapter2_Sec5.pdf) (accessed 10 February 2011).

<sup>94</sup> Japan Defense White Paper 2010, [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2010/23Part2\\_Chapter2\\_Sec4.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2010/23Part2_Chapter2_Sec4.pdf) (accessed 10 February 2011).

eliminate its main battle tank and is even spending money to procure the latest version of this defense mechanism, even though it hardly responds to Japan's current or projected future threat. The replacement of the Shirane class destroyers with 22DDH destroyers will give the MSDF destroyers helicopter landing capability and increase their capability in surveillance, reconnaissance, and search and rescue operations, as well as potential combat operations if this were ever necessary. This procurement will surely enhance the MSDF's already advanced capability to conduct maritime operations in Japan's territorial waters, sea-lanes, and sea lines of communication. Ballistic missile defense gets constant attention throughout Japan's defense budget; it is a main priority of its defense spending, if not the main priority. With the attention these systems are receiving from the MOD, it will be no surprise if Japan's BMD system is one of the premier systems globally in the near future. Improving fighter capability may not seem like an unusual statement in a defense budget or among future priorities, but in the case of the ASDF, it says a great deal. The ASDF F-2 and F-15 fighters are outdated, need extensive maintenance, and eventually need to be replaced. Japan's plan was to replace them with the F-22 from the United States, but with the U.S. cancelling the F-22 program, the future fighter aircraft from the ASDF is unknown. The ASDF can only maintain the F-2 and F-15 for so long—it needs a long-term solution to its fighter aircraft problem. One sentence about future priorities of the JSDF gives enormous insight into the future capabilities and problems facing Japan over its security needs. The good news for Japan is that it recognizes its deficiencies and is attempting to do something about them, but making major changes to defense systems is not always easy and certainly not simple.

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## IV. CONCLUSION

### A. OVERALL CAPABILITIES OF THE JSDF

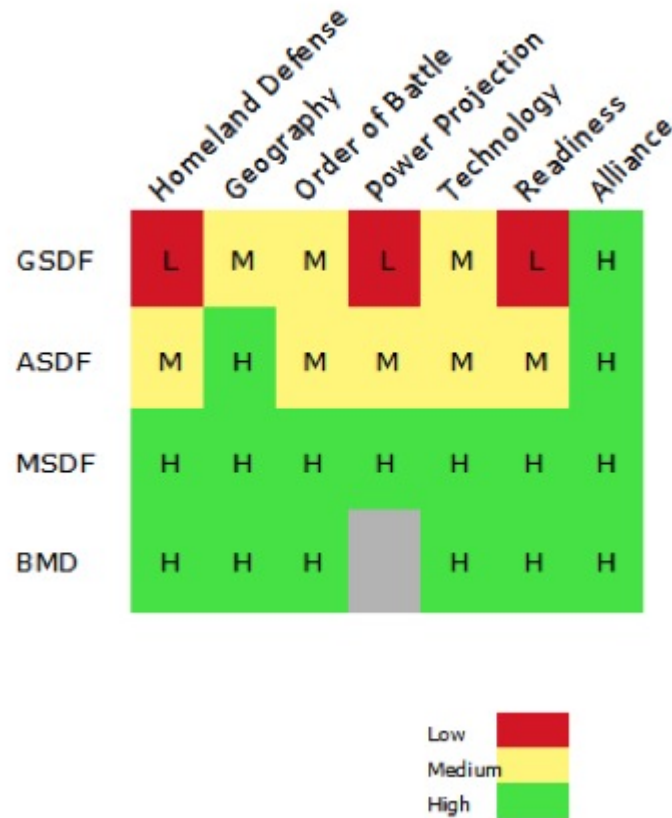


Figure 9. JSDF Capabilities Chart

Figure 9 summarizes the overall capabilities of the JSDF. It is clear that the areas of high capability include the BMD program, the MSDF, and areas of the ASDF. The GSDF does not have the high level of capability of the other services, but the Ministry of Defense is certainly working to improve the ability of the GSDF to defend the homeland and to improve its overall readiness through training and limited participation in international operations. The BMD program and MSDF are as capable as any other militaries in the world (outside the U.S.), and the focus of the MOD on increasing their capabilities will continue this trend in the future. The ASDF is attempting to address some of its technological issues with the acquisition of future generation fight aircraft,

but obviously faces obstacles. The ASDF has also acquired the capability to improve its power projection capability through logistical and personnel transport and aerial refueling. As these systems come online and are proven, the ASDF's level of capability should increase.

## **B. IS THE JSDF A NORMAL MILITARY?**

The reason this question is frequently debated in Asian security affairs is that it has no simple answer. National security issues in Japan are complex by nature because of Japan's imperialist history, the effect of World War II, its pacifist constitution and society, and its strategic alliance with the U.S. The role the JSDF plays in international affairs is not normal, but it is slowly changing. The restrictions and constraints the JSDF faces in defending its homeland are not normal, but its ability to conduct this defense (with the aid of the U.S.) certainly can be considered normal. The capabilities of the JSDF are normal in many areas or even exceptional, but their combination of limitations and potential capabilities is quite abnormal. These three areas give a better understanding of what the JSDF is, but whether it is normal or not will continue to be up for debate.

The JSDF has taken part in many peacekeeping and humanitarian aid/disaster relief operations over the last two decades. Its participation may have been limited in number at times, but the support it provided was as necessary to the missions as that provided by any other military. Whether the support took the form of electoral or military observers, engineering, transportation, minesweeping, or staff officers, the JSDF's participation was in line with what militaries from other nations were providing at the time. Since United Nations operations are by design post-conflict, the restrictions the JSDF would have in a combat environment did not apply. The JSDF could participate fully and equally with its counterparts from other nations. This support will undoubtedly continue in the future and will most likely increase as Japan seeks to gain prestige in international security operations commensurate with its economic status.

JSDF participation in UN operations may lead one to believe it is a completely normal military. But its participation in Samawah, Iraq, suggests that the GSDF is very abnormal. What other military in a combat environment has rules of engagement and

constraints on its actions so strict that it must be provided physical security by another international security force? Of course, simply participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom was a major step for the GSDF, but it was certainly not the action of a normal military. The GSDF has evolved greatly in the last two decades. Are the limitations imposed on it during OIF part of this evolution, and will they eventually participate in future combat operations side-by-side with other militaries? The answer to that is unknown, but I find this prospect unlikely in the immediate future. Taking part in international security operations satisfies the needs of Japan's leadership, while also producing pride in its society as whole. Participating in combat operations is still very contentious and unlikely to become less so soon. As a member of the UN, Japan will not be called on to participate in combat operations like OIF or OEF. Japan is on the outside looking in at other international institutions that might request this type of participation from JSDF in the future—that is, institutions like NATO, or, potentially, ASEAN.

The JSDF has the ability to defend its homeland from external threats. Its ability to conduct this defense varies just like it does for any other military in the world. When combining all of its capabilities with its limitations, the JSDF is quite normal—but some of its methods of defense are abnormal. For example, the MSDF has proven its capability in surveillance, detection, tracking, and deterrence missions in Japanese territorial waters, as described in the previous chapter. It has the naval structure, capacity, and experience to challenge any enemy naval force that enters its area of influence. This is not to say the MSDF will conduct all-out naval battles with China or the U.S, but it does have the capability to deter China or North Korea from probing too aggressively in the areas surrounding Japan. The ASDF has the capability to detect and deter enemy aircraft from probing Japanese airspace, as Lind details in her description of the ASDF.<sup>95</sup> The future capability of the ASDF is deteriorating as its aging F-2 and F-15 fighters fall further behind technologically superior potential enemy aircraft. Japan recognizes this future limitation, but is struggling to find a solution. If it fails to remedy this problem, Japan may face a troubling capability gap. The GSDF is not as prepared to

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<sup>95</sup> Jennifer M. Lind. "Pacifism or Passing the Buck? Testing the Theories of Japanese Security Policy." *International Security* (The MIT Press) 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004): 98.

defend Japan's homeland as it needs to be. For example, the geographic layout of the overall force is still structured to respond to Cold War era threats. Also, the CRF within the GSDF is young, inexperienced, and still developing, and would most likely not respond well to a ground invasion of Japan. Although the GSDF is lacking in both these areas, the MOD recognizes these limitations and is working on solutions. And, as we have seen, when the MOD recognizes changes that need to be made, as with the need for a BMD system or to restructure the GSDF, it finds a way to enact policy change to better respond to Japan's current and future threats. In its ability to defend the homeland, Japan is quite normal. Japan also has its strategic relationship with the U.S. as an additional layer of defense. Japan does not feel the need to develop a nuclear capability because it falls under the nuclear umbrella of the U.S. Some may find this to be an abnormal quality of Japan and the JSDF, but Japan is certainly not alone in receiving protection from the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Western Europe, South Korea, Taiwan, to name a few, fall under U.S. nuclear protection, and the normalcy of the French, German, ROK, or British militaries are never questioned.

BMD is a perfect example of a normal, if not exceptional, capability of the JSDF—which, combined, with Japanese pacifist restrictions, seems extremely abnormal. The original plan for the BMD system in Japan required the Prime Minister to authorize launch against any ballistic missile attack. The time required for such authorization runs contrary to the time sensitivity of an effective BMD system. Once again, leaders in Japan understand when changes need to be made to its security policies, but it often takes time for changes to be made. As discussed earlier, Japan has brought authorization down to a lower level of government, but further reforms are needed. In BMD, the JSDF is normal, exceptional, and abnormal all at the same time.

Another area where the JSDF is abnormal is in its power projection capability. With the money it spends on defense, combined with its overall technological capacity, its limitations in projecting power are abnormal. But this inability to project power outside Japanese territorial is perfectly in line with its pacifist nature. Even though limited power projection compliments the pacifist nature of Japan, the leadership in Japan recognizes this security gap and is finding ways to alleviate the issue. As described

earlier, the ASDF is acquiring the Boeing 767 Tanker, which will provide long-range transport for personnel and equipment, as well as in-air refueling for ASDF aircraft. Even where the JSDF's abnormalities are logical for Japan, its defense leadership has recognized this and is attempting eliminate the issue.

The JSDF will likely be considered abnormal for the foreseeable future, as long as Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution remains and strict limitations are placed on various JSDF operations. But many aspects of the JSDF are reputable defense forces and further capabilities are being developed and enhanced. Even if the JSDF is not normal now, it is becoming more normal every day.

### **C. WHAT IMPACT DOES THE JSDF HAVE ON U.S. JAPAN RELATIONS?**

The previous sections offered a detailed examination and analysis of the history of JSDF and the current capabilities of the force. The intent of this research was to give more depth to the academic work previously conducted on the capabilities of JSDF in order to better understand its role in the international community and its relationship with its strongest ally, the United States. The thesis concludes by exploring how the capabilities of the JSDF affect Japan's ability to operate independent of the U.S. military—or, that is, with no more than the usual level of support provided by an alliance of two normal states. The future of the U.S.-Japan strategic relationship will also be analyzed. There is no concrete way to predict the future relationship of these two allies, but understanding the national security system of the Japanese state is one tool to help understand their combined future.

The capabilities of the JSDF certainly have implications for the future relationship between the United States and Japan. Japan's defense capabilities were built around its relationship with and the protection provided by the U.S. That said, if Japan were required to provide its own defense independent of the U.S, would it be able to do so? A scenario of this nature, although unlikely, could occur with the complete withdrawal of American troops from East Asia. A more likely scenario involves the U.S. drawing down its forces even further than it currently has and calling on allies like Japan to carry more of the security burden in the region. Japan is in a much better position to handle the latter



than to operate completely independent of the U.S. Japan's defense structure is built on four tiers of capability, with BMD, the MSDF, the ASDF, and the GSDF residing on each tier. BMD has been completely implemented and integrated with the U.S. military: it would not be able to function without its support. "Many analysts see U.S.-Japan efforts on missile defense as perhaps the most robust form of bilateral cooperation in recent years."<sup>96</sup> I agree with this CRS report assessment: no military relationship is stronger between the United States and Japan than the one created from the joint BMD program. It is not only a relationship founded in military and political cooperation, it has also rolled over into cooperation between Japanese and American defense firms. The threat from North Korea cannot be underestimated in this discussion. Continual provocations by the DPRK have led to more integration between the two countries and strengthened their long-term relationship. Japan's recognition of the severity of the North Korean threat is clear from its own public statements, which declare that "Combined with the nuclear issue, North Korea's missile issue is thus becoming a destabilizing factor not only for the Asia-Pacific region but also the entire international community."<sup>97</sup> The loss of BMD would severely weaken Japan against potential ballistic missile attack from North Korea. Japan has not always had this capability, so it is reasonable to say it could certainly survive without it until it were able to develop the capability on its own. With an antagonist just across the Sea of Japan, Japan's leadership is not likely to take that chance. BMD is an area in which the U.S. presence would remain even if the level of American troops in East Asia were brought to a minimum.

The MSDF and the ASDF are fully operational and have the capability to operate independent of the United States. Once again, the military support provided by the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet, as well as a constant presence from U.S. Air Force and Marine Corps aircraft in Japan, provide additional protection in the airspace around Japan. Japan's hoping for them to leave does not seem plausible. The MSDF has the ability to operate independently, but it also has a strong relationship with the U.S. Navy. "U.S. Navy

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<sup>96</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Weston S. Konishi. "The Changing U.S.-Japan Alliance: Implications for U.S. Interests." CRS, Congressional Research Service, Washington DC, 2009, 8.

<sup>97</sup> Japan Defense White Papers 2007, Part 2, Section 2, 35, [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2007/12Part1\\_Chap2\\_Sec2.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2007/12Part1_Chap2_Sec2.pdf) (accessed 06 March 2011).

officials have claimed that they have a closer relationship with the MSDF than any other navy in the world, with over 100 joint exercises annually.”<sup>98</sup> This strong relationship was founded during the Cold War and has grown through joint exercises and operations for the past two decades. The BMD program has also strengthened the relationship, with Aegis ballistic missile defense systems being utilized by both the United States and Japan. The relationship being fostered between the two allies in recent years is only creating a stronger bond. Three specific MSDF operations noted above have strengthened the alliance, while also providing credibility and legitimacy to the MSDF: refueling operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, and disaster relief support provided in Thailand and Indonesia. In all three of these operations, the MSDF and U.S. Navy have worked side by side, supporting each other’s operations. The MSDF refueling operations provided direct support to U.S. Navy ships. Future exercises and operations between the two forces will continue, and the relationship will grow stronger. There are obstacles in doctrine and operational methods, but through continued cooperation, these obstacles will likely deteriorate.

The ASDF has not trained or operated as closely with its American counterparts as the MSDF has, but connections between the two forces certainly exist. The number of joint exercises conducted between the ASDF and U.S. Air Force, while limited, doubled from 1985 to 2004. And Japanese aircraft have been routinely been refueled by U.S. tankers.<sup>99</sup> Integration and interoperability between ASDF aircraft (including the F-2, F-4, and F-15) and United States aircraft also creates a significant tie between the two allies, as does the use of the same manufacturers for weapons systems. One recent area of contention between the two allies concerns the development of the F-22. The United States canceled its government support for the new platform in favor of the Joint Strike Fighter, as other priorities factored into the F-22 cancellation. Issues of this nature could strain the U.S.-Japan relationship were Tokyo to turn to another system that competes with U.S. manufacturers and U.S. military interests. The ASDF needs to determine and

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<sup>98</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Weston S. Konishi. "The Changing U.S.-Japan Alliance: Implications for U.S. Interests." CRS, Congressional Research Service, Washington DC, 2009, 10.

<sup>99</sup> Richard J. Samuels. *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, (2007): 94.

pursue a replacement for its current fight aircraft or it will potentially fall behind its regional adversaries. The ASDF could operate independent of the U.S. military, but its overall capabilities and capacity to conduct various missions would be severely diminished.

The GSDF does not have the capability to defend the Japanese homeland for a sustained period of time without eventual support from the U.S. Marine Corps. The GSDF is taking steps to develop a more effective fighting force that is no longer dependent on U.S. support. The Central Readiness Force of the GSDF is young and inexperienced, but will eventually be able to provide this mission. The development of the CRF in 2007 appears initially to be an additional avenue for strengthening U.S.-Japan relations, as its personnel are already receiving specialized training in the U.S. Its mission is to “respond quickly either to domestic emergencies or overseas missions. Specialized units such as a WMD defense unit, special operations unit, and airborne unit belong to the CRF.”<sup>100</sup> With its core mission and specialized units, advanced training and future exercises will certainly be provided by U.S. Special Forces units, developing another area in which the two countries will likely increase cooperation and ties in the future. As explained previously, the GSDF lacks certain capabilities, and the stronger the relationship it has with U.S. military ground forces in the future, the more capable it will become in the long run. With increased GSDF capability, questions about the need for U.S. ground forces in Japan could eventually grow even louder and more nationalized, but that stage is still far off, and the benefits of the American presence and partnership will continue to support the alliance for years to come.

The capabilities of the various branches of the JSDF support further integration between the U.S. and Japan. These relationships make it less likely, not more, that JSDF capabilities will cause the U.S. military to remove itself from Japan. The MSDF and the ASDF have not recently achieved their current levels of effectiveness. Neither service has required the presence of the United States in order to protect the seas and airspace around Japan. The U.S. military could leave at any time and these two forces would be

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<sup>100</sup> Yuki Tatsumi. “Japan’s National Security Policy Infrastructure: Can Tokyo Meet Washington’s Expectation?” Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center (2008): 73.

capable of defending Japan. Their capabilities have not been the catalyst for potential U.S. military removal, and it is unlikely they will cause this in the future. To the contrary, not only does the U.S. presence provide further protection for Japan, it also provides enhanced training opportunities for the MSDF and ASDF and the ability to operate together to enhance each other's capabilities. As the CRF and GSDF further develop, the presence of ground troops could be called into question more than it is today. The presence of ground troops is unpopular in Okinawa, but this unpopularity is not related to the GSDF. When and if the GSDF is more fully respected and Japanese society trusts it to provide for its defense in the way the U.S. Marine Corps can, it may add more fuel to the fire of American ground force removal. In the meantime, American ground forces provide enhanced training and education opportunities for the GSDF. It is extremely unlikely GSDF capabilities will cause a shift in American troop presence in Okinawa or anywhere in Japan.

What overall impact does JSDF capabilities have on the U.S.-Japan strategic relationship? The current and future capabilities of the JSDF are leading to more integration and interoperability between the U.S. military and the JSDF. In my analysis, BMD, MSDF operations, ASDF weapons systems, and CRF training are just the tip of the iceberg in integration between the strategic partners. The United States needs strong alliances in East Asia, an area of strategic and special interest. In the past, this required a large U.S. military footprint in Japan, South Korea, and other areas of East Asia. As JSDF capability increases and the alliance strengthens, the number of American troops may be reduced, while the relationship becomes further integrated. As long as the United States has economic and security interests in East Asia, it will require that those interests be protected, either with American troops or with allies it can depend on and integrated with when necessary. Other conditions may cause a reduction in the U.S. presence in Japan—for example, the peaceful reunification of Korea under a pro-democracy and America-friendly government. Another condition for U.S. departure would be a working security relationship with China for both the U.S. and Japan. The first condition seems more likely than the later and neither condition is in sight at this time.

The capabilities of the JSDF are varied, as has been described here, but they are enhancing the relationship between the U.S. and Japan. The JSDF benefits from the presence of the American military through training opportunities, advanced education opportunities, joint operational experiences, and further integration and interoperability of its forces. The alliance is strong, and as the JSDF increases its capabilities, the alliance gets stronger.

#### **D. FUTURE RESEARCH ON JSDF CAPABILITIES**

Two main problems characterize academic research previously conducted on the JSDF. The first and most significant is that existing research fails to analyze the JSDF at a detailed level that gives a true indication of the actual capability of the force. When scholars and policymakers make assessments and predictions concerning the future actions of the JSDF, it is important that a complete understanding of the force be available for them. The second issue regarding capabilities of the JSDF or any military force is the frequency in which they can change. Jennifer Lind's assessment was conducted almost ten years ago and Glenn Hook's research was done over twenty-five years ago. Not only has the JSDF changed enormously during this time, but so have the international security environment and the requirements necessary to have a fully capable military.

Although this research thoroughly analyzes the current capabilities and history of the JSDF, there are certainly other factors important in understanding the JSDF and making predictions about its future behavior. Outside the scope of this thesis were the now-evolving political relationship between the new ruling party, the Democratic Party of Japan, and the Ministry of Defense and the JSDF. The Liberal Democratic Party controlled Japan for most of the post-WWII era, and with a shift in leadership, changes in national defense will certainly occur. This is an area in which further research is needed to better understand the future of the JSDF and the U.S.-Japan alliance. The culture of pacifism in Japan was also referenced in this thesis and is studied by scholars, but the impact this culture has on the future of JSDF requires further analysis. The presence of U.S. military forces on Japan is often debated in Japan and in academia. The American

presence has both positive and negative implications for the future of the JSDF, and this subject deserves further research. Finally, the economic and financial success of Japan in the post-WWII era has enabled it to pursue a more normal and independent national security structure. This implies that recent economic and financial woes in Japan could have an impact on national security and the future capabilities of the JSDF. A deeper understanding of all these issues would further contribute to a more complete understanding of the capabilities of the JSDF and the future of Japan in the international security community.

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